MATTHEW ARNOLD.

He preserved from chance control
The fortress of his 'stablisht soul;
In all things sought to see the Whole;
Brooked no disguise;
And set his heart upon the goal,
Not on the prize.

And with those few he shall survive
Who seem not to compete or strive,
Yet with the foremost still arrive,
Prevailing still:
The Elect with whom the stars connive
To work their will.

W. Watson.

SELECTED POEMS

OF

MATTHEW ARNOLD

EDITED BY

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PREFACE.

This volume of selections is intended for pupils in middle and upper forms of secondary schools, and the poems chosen for inclusion are those which can be understood and appreciated to some extent by boys and girls, under the guidance of a sympathetic teacher. A few passages are really too introspective for young people, but because of their musical quality they can be readily learned, and will be appreciated more and more as the years go by.

The Introduction is intended for the teacher, who will be able to use the short biography for the purpose of connecting some of the outward circumstances of Arnold's life with his work as a man of letters. The few remarks offered on his characteristics as a poet can be easily illustrated from the poems included in this volume.

The Notes are intended for the pupil. In writing them care has been taken to insert nothing which will draw the reader's attention from the poem he is studying to irrelevant side issues. The editor's purpose is to lead the young reader to appreciate those poems which are placed before him, and, if possible, to create a desire to obtain the complete edition of Arnold's poems and make further acquaintance with his work.

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INTRODUCTION.

MATTHEW ARNOLD was the eldest son of Dr. Arnold, of Rugby, and was born at Laleham, near Staines, on Christmas Eve of the year 1822. He was six years of age when his family removed to Rugby, and not long afterwards he returned to Laleham to become the pupil of his maternal uncle, the Rev. John Buckland, in whose house he lived for about six years. He was then sent to Winchester, but in the following year he went to Rugby, whence he proceeded to Balliol in 1841 with a classical scholarship. Five years later he was elected a Fellow of Oriel, and after a short time as a master at Rugby he became, in 1847, private secretary to the Marquis of Lansdowne, who was President of the Council, and therefore head of the Education Department of that time. After four years Arnold was appointed an Inspector of Schools, and about the same time he married.

While acting as private secretary to Lord Lansdowne, he had published a small volume entitled *The Strayed Reveller, and other Poems*, which contained, among other pieces, *The Forsaken Merman* and *Mycerinus*. In 1852 appeared a second collection, with the title *Empedocles on Etna, and other Poems*, which included, besides *Tristram and Iseult*, several of his best lyrics, among them being *A Summer Night*, *The Youth of Nature*, *The Youth of Man*, and *Memorial Verses*. In the following year he issued his *Poems*, a collection of those already published, with several textual alterations and certain new pieces, of which the most noteworthy were *Sohrab and Rustum*, *The Scholar-Gipsy*, and the short but exquisite lyric, *Requiescat*. This volume

contained also a long preface, in which the writer develops his theory of poetry, claiming that it ought to be impersonal or objective, and that the poet must carefully regard unity, consistency, and the total impression of each poem on the mind and heart of the reader. In the *Sohrab* of this volume we have an almost perfect example of this form of poetry, but it is remarkable that Arnold is now remembered chiefly because of the introspective or subjective nature of his verse, for his deep and true insight into the heart of man, for the revelation which he gives of himself as a thinker, as a student "of man, of nature, and of human life." A volume issued in 1855 is chiefly noteworthy because it contained *Balder Dead*. Two years later Arnold was made Professor of Poetry at Oxford, and he held this appointment for ten years.

After taking up the Oxford professorship Arnold's output as a poet was small. It was by his work published between 1849 and 1855 that he made his impress on English poetry, though at intervals up to the end of his life he published poems, most of which take high artistic rank. Among these we may note, in order of their appearance, *Rugby Chapel*, an exquisite poem on his father; *Thyrsis*, a monody on the death of his friend, Arthur Hugh Clough, himself a poet of some distinction; and *Westminster Abbey*, written after the death of another friend, Dean Stanley.

In the latter half of his career Arnold was distinguished as a critic of life and letters, and as a writer of prose which has rarely been excelled for excellence of form, persuasive quality, quiet and delicious humour, deep insight, pointed and trenchant criticism, and all the indefinable elements which go to make up charm. He could render interesting and readable even the contents of a Government Blue-Book, and his reports on education at home and on the Continent make excellent reading, even though many of the pressing problems with which he dealt may not be those of the present time. His two volumes of *Essays in Criticism* contain some of his best prose work, and his essay *On Translating Homer*, in its appeal to first principles of scholarly and effective translation, makes a valuable addition to the library of the critic. Some years after his retirement from the Government service

Arnold visited the United States on a lecturing tour, and in 1885 published his *Discourses in America*. Three years later he died suddenly at Liverpool, and was buried in the churchyard of All Saints', Laleham.

A modern critic compares Matthew Arnold as a poet to "a translucent tarn among the mountains." The expression is illuminating and significant. Arnold is not the poet of the crowd which is content to trudge along the easy paths down in the sheltered valley. His message is for the strenuous climbers who aspire to scale the loftiest peaks, and in the attainment of their object are ready, in the highest sense, to "scorn delights and live laborious days." Yet the poet is not, as a rule, obscure or ambiguous. Not many English poets write with such studied simplicity of language. The tarn is hard to reach, but when the climber at last wins to a sight of it, he finds it as clear as crystal.

Matthew Arnold, then, is the poet of the thinker, of the student who has drawn from Life, from Nature and from Art "the best that has been thought and said in the world." This is the character of the mental and spiritual climbing that must be done before the reader can appreciate to the full the excellence of the poet's work. He must learn to live in the same world of elevated thought, where "nothing common is or mean," and he must by careful study make himself acquainted with the models of literary art which were always, consciously or subconsciously, before the mental eye of the poet. It is not that Arnold draws frequently upon the subject-matter of the ancient classics—most of his best poems deal with medieval or modern themes—but that he breathes into his work the classical spirit, the love of perfection in form, the exact suitability of the verbal expression to the thought, the high seriousness and Olympian sense of aloofness from a world little troubled with uncomfortable ideals or with the divine strife of duty, and the restraining curb of the clear intellect upon the heart and emotions, which is so purely Greek.

Yet the themes of his poems, though lofty, are as a rule truly human, and come home readily to the hearts of all. In *Sohrab and Rustum* the sub ect is the mutual love of a

worthy father and a worthy son. In *Balder Dead* it is the love of strong men for a lost comrade, for it is the essentially human rather than the godlike attributes of the dwellers in Valhalla from which the poem draws its chief distinction and attraction. In *The Church of Brou* it is the love of a wife for her husband. Nearly all the best lyrics and elegiac poems strike the personal note—the love of a friend for a friend, of a brother for a brother, of a son for a father, or of "man and woman when they love their best." The human feeling may be kept under verbal restraint, but it is all the more real and keen for the repression.

One of Arnold's prominent characteristics as a poet is his power of pictorial representation, and in the best of his word-pictures he describes action and continuous movement, thus preserving the canons of art which assign the representation of still life and of arrested action or the crisis of movement to the painter. Some of the best examples of the poet's ability in this direction are to be found in the poems printed in this volume. One of the finest is the description of the combat in *Sohrab and Rustum* (lines 470-512). No painter could have done full justice to this scene. The reader should note also the art with which the appearance of Pecan Wisa is described in lines 94-103 of the same poem. Other noteworthy examples are :

(1) The concluding portion of *Sohrab*, beginning with the line, "But the majestic river floated on."

(2) Lines 72-86, and 252-267, of *Balder Dead* (Part I.).

(3) Lines 47-69 of *Balder Dead* (Part II.).

(4) Lines 181-212 of *Balder Dead* (Part III.).

(5) The last poem in *The Church of Brou*.

(6) The central portion of *The Strayed Reveller*, lines 142-205.

(7) The first and second stanzas of *The Scholar Gipsy*.

Many of the poet's most beautiful word-pictures are to be found in the similes, which form another striking characteristic of his work. In many of these he loses touch with the comparison which he is attempting to make, and they become in consequence detached pictures, having only slight connection with the immediate matter in hand. One of the most perfect

examples both of pictorial beauty and of detachment is contained in the last two stanzas of *The Scholar-Gipsy*. We cannot consider its connection with the poem until we have enjoyed its delicate intrinsic beauty. The fitness of the simile must then be studied as a thing apart. Examples are numerous throughout the poems printed in this volume. A few of the most striking are :

(1) *Sohrab and Rustum*, lines 154-156; 284-290; 555-572; 633-637.

(2) *Balder Dead*, Part I., lines 230-234; Part II., 157-162; Part III., lines 363-373.

Musical quality is not a prominent feature of Arnold's best work. In his high seriousness he lacks the ease of the born lyrist; there is in his poetry little of the spirit of abandon, nor does the reader get the general impression gained from the work of some other poets whom it would be easy to name.

> "I do but sing because I must,
> And pipe but as the linnets sing."

Yet there are passages in his poems, many of them contained in this volume, of rare musical beauty. Take as examples lines 30-45 of *The Forsaken Merman*, which recalls Shakespeare's "delicate Ariel"; lines 85-107 of the same poem; and the lyric entitled *Philomela*, especially the beginning and the concluding portion. We have also in the poems given in this book many instances of the expression of sense by sound, as in :

> "As on some partridge in the corn a hawk,
> That long has tower'd in the airy clouds,
> Drops like a plummet."

> "He spake and brush'd soft by and disappear'd."

> "The snorting steeds
> Went straining through the crackling brushwood down."

> "Air-swept lindens yield
> Their scent, and rustle down their perfumed showers."

> "Listen with enchanted ears
> From the dark dingles to the nightingales."

"Their shields
Dash'd with a clang together, and a din
Rose, such as that the sinewy woodcutters
Make often in the forest's heart at morn,
Of hewing axes, crashing trees."

The last quotation stands at the beginning of the description of the fight in *Sohrab* (lines 470-512), the whole of which is characterized by rare felicity of language. The sound of the syllables throughout suggests the action.

But the effect of Arnold's work on the mind of the appreciative reader is not greatly dependent upon more or less mechanical poetic devices, or upon any self-conscious art. His work is throughout executed in the "grand manner," and it is the thought rather than the external form upon which rests his chief claim to distinction and appreciation. Many of his lines and phrases have become almost proverbial.

"Tasks in hours of insight will'd
Can be through hours of gloom fulfill'd."

Morality.

"Too great for haste, too high for rivalry."

Quiet Work.

"Who saw life steadily, and saw it whole."

Sonnet: To a Friend.

"To be like Nature strong, like Nature cool."

Sonnet: In Harmony with Nature.

"Calm's not life's crown, though calm is well."

Youth and Calm.

"Will like a dividing spear."

Switzerland.

"That sweet city with her dreaming spires."

Thyrsis.

"On to the bound of the waste,
On to the city of God."

Rugby Chapel

"The day in his hotness,
The strife with the palm;
The night in her silence,
The stars in their calm."

Empedocles.

"But we, brought forth and reared in hours
Of change, alarm, surprise—
What shelter to grow ripe is ours?
What leisure to grow wise?"

R. W.

March, 1906.

SELECTIONS

FROM THE

POEMS OF MATTHEW ARNOLD.

SOHRAB AND RUSTUM.

AN EPISODE.

And the first grey of morning fill'd the east,
And the fog rose out of the Oxus stream.
But all the Tartar camp along the stream
Was hush'd, and still the men were plunged in sleep:
Sohrab alone, he slept not: all night long
He had lain wakeful, tossing on his bed;
But when the grey dawn stole into his tent,
He rose, and clad himself, and girt his sword,
And took his horseman's cloak, and left his tent,
And went abroad into the cold wet fog,
Through the dim camp to Peran-Wisa's tent.

Through the black Tartar tents he pass'd, which stood
Clustering like beehives on the low flat strand
Of Oxus, where the summer floods o'erflow
When the sun melts the snows in high Pamere:
Through the black tents he pass'd, o'er that low strand,
And to a hillock came, a little back
From the stream's brink, the spot where first a boat,
Crossing the stream in summer, scrapes the land.
The men of former times had crown'd the top

With a clay fort: but that was fall'n, and now
The Tartars built there Peran-Wisa's tent,
A dome of laths, and o'er it felts were spread.
And Sohrab came there, and went in, and stood
Upon the thick pil'd carpets in the tent,
And found the old man sleeping on his bed
Of rugs and felts, and near him lay his arms.
And Peran-Wisa heard him, though the step
Was dull'd; for he slept light, an old man's sleep;
And he rose quickly on one arm, and said:—
"Who art thou? for it is not yet clear dawn.
Speak! is there news, or any night alarm?"

But Sohrab came to the bedside, and said:—
"Thou know'st me, Peran-Wisa: it is I.
The sun is not yet risen, and the foe
Sleep; but I sleep not; all night long I lie
Tossing and wakeful, and I come to thee.
For so did King Afrasiab bid me seek
Thy counsel, and to heed thee as thy son,
In Samarcand, before the army march'd;
And I will tell thee what my heart desires.
Thou knowest if, since from Ader-baijan first
I came among the Tartars, and bore arms,
I have still serv'd Afrasiab well, and shown,
At my boy's years, the courage of a man.
This too thou know'st, that, while I still bear on
The conquering Tartar ensigns through the world,
And beat the Persians back on every field,
I seek one man, one man, and one alone—
Rustum, my father; who, I hop'd, should greet,
Should one day greet, upon some well-fought field
His not unworthy, not inglorious son.
So I long hop'd, but him I never find.
Come then, hear now, and grant me what I ask.
Let the two armies rest to-day: but I
Will challenge forth the bravest Persian lords
To meet me, man to man: if I prevail,
Rustum will surely hear it; if I fall—

Old man, the dead need no one, claim no kin.
Dim is the rumour of a common fight,
Where host meets host, and many names are sunk;
But of a single combat Fame speaks clear."

He spoke, and Peran-Wisa took the hand
Of the young man in his, and sigh'd, and said:—
"O Sohrab, an unquiet heart is thine!
Canst thou not rest among the Tartar chiefs
And share the battle's common chance with us
Who love thee, but must press for ever first,
In single fight incurring single risk,
To find a father thou hast never seen?
That were far best, my son, to stay with us
Unmurmuring; in our tents, while it is war,
And when 'tis truce, then in Afrasiab's towns.
But, if this one desire indeed rules all,
To seek out Rustum—seek him not through fight!
Seek him in peace, and carry to his arms,
O Sohrab, carry an unwounded son!
But far hence seek him, for he is not here,
For now it is not as when I was young,
When Rustum was in front of every fray:
But now he keeps apart, and sits at home,
In Seistan, with Zal, his father old.
Whether that his own mighty strength at last
Feels the abhorr'd approaches of old age;
Or in some quarrel with the Persian King.
There go:—Thou wilt not? Yet my heart forebodes
Danger or death awaits thee on this field.
Fain would I know thee safe and well, though lost
To us: fain therefore send thee hence, in peace
To seek thy father, not seek single fights
In vain:—but who can keep the lion's cub
From ravening? and who govern Rustum's son?
Go: I will grant thee what thy heart desires."

So said he, and dropp'd Sohrab's hand, and left
His bed, and the warm rugs whereon he lay:

And o'er his chilly limbs his woollen coat
He pass'd, and tied his sandals on his feet,
And threw a white cloak round him, and he took
In his right hand a ruler's staff, no sword;
And on his head he plac'd his sheep-skin cap,
Black, glossy, curl'd, the fleece of Kara-Kul;
And rais'd the curtain of his tent, and call'd
His herald to his side, and went abroad.

The sun by this had risen, and clear'd the fog
From the broad Oxus and the glittering sands:
And from their tents the Tartar horseman fil'd
Into the open plain; so Haman bade;
Haman, who next to Peran-Wisa rul'd
The host, and still was in his lusty prime.
From their black tents, long files of horse, they stream'd:
As when, some grey November morn, the files,
In marching order spread, of long-neck'd cranes
Stream over Casbin, and the southern slopes
Of Elburz, from the Aralian estuaries,
Or some froze Caspian reed-bed, southward bound
For the warm Persian sea-board: so they stream'd.
The Tartars of the Oxus, the King's guard,
First, with black sheep-skin caps and with long spears;
Large men, large steeds; who from Bokhara come
And Khiva, and ferment the milk of mares.
Next the more temperate Toorkmuns of the south,
The Tukas, and the lances of Salore,
And those from Attruck and the Caspian sands;
Light men, and on light steeds, who only drink
The acrid milk of camels, and their wells.
And then a swarm of wandering horse, who came
From far, and a more doubtful service own'd;
The Tartars of Ferghana, from the banks
Of the Jaxartes, men with scanty beards
And close-set skull-caps; and those wilder hordes
Who roam o'er Kipchak and the northern waste
Kalmuks and unkemp'd Kuzzaks, tribes who stray
Near the Pole, and wandering Kirghizzes,

Who come on shaggy ponies from Pamere.
These all fil'd out from camp into the plain,
And on the other side the Persians form'd:
First a light cloud of horse, Tartars they seem'd,
The Ilyats of Khorassan: and behind,
The royal troops of Persia, horse and foot,
Marshall'd battalions bright in burnish'd steel.
But Peran-Wisa with his herald came
Threading the Tartar squadrons to the front,
And with his staff kept back the foremost ranks.
And when Ferood, who led the Persians, saw
That Peran-Wisa kept the Tartars back,
He took his spear, and to the front he came,
And check'd his ranks, and fix'd them where they stood.

And the old Tartar came upon the sand
Betwixt the silent hosts, and spake, and said:—
"Ferood, and ye, Persians and Tartars, hear!
Let there be truce between the hosts to-day,
But choose a champion from the Persian lords
To fight our champion Sohrab, man to man."
As, in the country, on a morn in June,
When the dew glistens on the pearled ears,
A shiver runs through the deep corn for joy—
So, when they heard what Peran-Wisa said,
A thrill through all the Tartar squadrons ran
Of pride and hope for Sohrab, whom they lov'd.

But as a troop of pedlars, from Cabool,
Cross underneath the Indian Caucasus,
That vast sky-neighbouring mountain of milk snow;
Winding so high, that, as they mount, they pass
Long flocks of travelling birds dead on the snow,
Chok'd by the air, and scarce can they themselves
Slake their parch'd throats with sugar'd mulberries—
In single file they move, and stop their breath,
For fear they should dislodge the o'erhanging snows—
So the pale Persians held their breath with fear.

And to Ferood his brother chiefs came up
To counsel; Gudurz and Zoarrah came,
And Feraburz, who rul'd the Persian host
Second, and was the uncle of the King:
These came and counsell'd; and then Gudurz said:—

"Ferood, shame bids us take their challenge up,
Yet champion have we none to match this youth.
He has the wild stag's foot, the lion's heart.
But Rustum came last night; aloof he sits
And sullen, and has pitch'd his tents apart:
Him will I seek, and carry to his ear
The Tartar challenge, and this young man's name.
Haply he will forget his wrath, and fight.
Stand forth the while, and take their challenge up."

So spake he; and Ferood stood forth and said:—
"Old man, be it agreed as thou hast said.
Let Sohrab arm, and we will find a man."

He spoke; and Peran-Wisa turn'd, and strode
Back to the opening squadrons to his tent.
But through the anxious Persians Gudurz ran,
And cross'd the camp which lay behind, and reach'd,
Out on the sands beyond it, Rustum's tents.
Of scarlet cloth they were, and glittering gay,
Just pitch'd: the high pavilion in the midst
Was Rustum's, and his men lay camped around.
And Gudurz enter'd Rustum's tent, and found
Rustum: his morning meal was done, but still
The table stood beside him, charg'd with food;
A side of roasted sheep, and cakes of bread,
And dark-green melons; and there Rustum sate
Listless, and held a falcon on his wrist,
And play'd with it; but Gudurz came and stood
Before him; and he looked, and saw him stand;
And with a cry sprang up, and dropp'd the bird,
And greeted Gudurz with both hands, and said:—
"Welcome!" these eyes could see no better sight,
What news? but sit down first, and eat and drink."

But Gudurz stood in the tent door, and said:—
"Not now: a time will come to eat and drink,
But not to-day: to-day has other needs.
The armies are drawn out, and stand at gaze:
For from the Tartars is a challenge brought
To pick a champion from the Persian lords
To fight their champion—and thou know'st his name—
Sohrab men call him, but his birth is hid.
O Rustum, like thy might is this young man's!
He has the wild stag's foot, the lion's heart.
And he is young, and Iran's chiefs are old,
Or else too weak; and all eyes turn to thee.
Come down and help us, Rustum, or we lose."

He spoke: but Rustum answered with a smile:—
"Go to! if Iran's chiefs are old, then I
Am older: if the young are weak, the King
Errs strangely: for the King, for Kai Khosroo,
Himself is young, and honours younger men,
And lets the aged moulder to their graves.
Rustum he loves no more, but loves the young—
The young may rise at Sohrab's vaunts, not I.
For what care I, though all speak Sohrab's fame?
For would that I myself had such a son,
And not that one slight helpless girl I have,
A son so fam'd, so brave, to send to war,
And I to tarry with the snow-hair'd Zal,
My father, whom the robber Afghans vex,
And clip his borders short, and drive his herds,
And he has none to guard his weak old age.
There would I go, and hang my armour up,
And with my great name fence that weak old man,
And spend the goodly treasures I have got,
And rest my age, and hear of Sohrab's fame,
And leave to death the hosts of thankless kings,
And with these slaughterous hands draw sword no more."

He spoke, and smil'd; and Gudurz made reply:—
"What then, O Rustum, will men say to this,

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And rest my age, and hear of Sohrab's fame,
And leave to death the hosts of thankless kings,
And with these slaughterous hands draw sword no more."

He spoke, and smil'd; and Gudurz made reply:—
"What then, O Rustum, will men say to this,

When Sohrab dares our bravest forth, and seeks
Thee most of all, and thou, whom most he seeks,
Hidest thy face? Take heed, lest men should say,
Like some old miser, Rustum hoards his fame,
And shuns to peril it with younger men."

And, greatly mov'd, then Rustum made reply:—
"O Gudurz, wherefore dost thou say such words?
Thou knowest better words than this to say.
What is one more, one less, obscure or fam'd,
Valiant or craven, young or old, to me?
Are not they mortal, am not I myself?
But who for men of nought would do great deeds?
Come, thou shalt see how Rustum hoards his fame.
But I will fight unknown, and in plain arms;
Let not men say of Rustum, he was match'd
In single fight with any mortal man."
He spoke, and frown'd; and Gudurz turn'd and ran
Back quickly through the camp in fear and joy,
Fear at his wrath, but joy that Rustum came.
But Rustum strode to his tent door, and call'd
His followers in, and bade them bring his arms,
And clad himself in steel: the arms he chose
Were plain, and on his shield was no device,
Only his helm was rich, inlaid with gold,
And from the fluted spine atop a plume
Of horsehair wav'd, a scarlet horsehair plume.
So arm'd he issued forth; and Ruksh, his horse,
Follow'd him, like a faithful hound, at heel,
Ruksh, whose renown was nois'd through all the earth,
The horse, whom Rustum on a foray once
Did in Bokhara by the river find
A colt beneath its dam, and drove him home,
And rear'd him; a bright bay, with lofty crest;
Dight with a saddle-cloth of broider'd green
Crusted with gold, and on the ground were work'd
All beasts of chase, all beasts which hunters know:
So follow'd, Rustum left his tents, and cross'd
The camp, and to the Persian host appear'd.

And all the Persians knew him, and with shouts
Hail'd; but the Tartars knew not who he was.
And dear as the wet diver to the eyes
Of his pale wife who waits and weeps on shore,
By sandy Bahrein, in the Persian Gulf,
Plunging all day in the blue waves, at night,
Having made up his tale of precious pearls,
Rejoins her in their hut upon the sands—
So dear to the pale Persians Rustum came.

And Rustum to the Persian front advanc'd,
And Sohrab arm'd in Haman's tent, and came.
And as afield the reapers cut a swathe
Down through the middle of a rich man's corn,
And in the midst a stubble, short and bare;
So on each side were squares of men, with spears
Bristling, and in the midst, the open sand.
And Rustum came upon the sand, and cast
His eyes towards the Tartar tents, and saw
Sohrab come forth, and ey'd him as he came.

As some rich woman, on a winter's morn,
Eyes through her silken curtains the poor drudge
Who with numb blacken'd fingers makes her fire—
At cock-crow, on a starlit winter's morn,
When the frost flowers the whiten'd window-panes—
And wonders how she lives, and what the thoughts
Of that poor drudge may be; so Rustum ey'd
The unknown adventurous youth, who from afar
Came seeking Rustum, and defying forth
All the most valiant chiefs: long he perus'd
His spirited air, and wonder'd who he was.
For very young he seem'd, tenderly rear'd,
Like some young cypress, tall, and dark, and straight,
Which in a queen's secluded garden throws
Its slight dark shadow on the moonlit turf,
By midnight, to a bubbling fountain's sound—
So slender Sohrab seemed, so softly rear'd.

And a deep pity entered Rustum's soul
As he beheld him coming; and he stood,
And beckon'd to him with his hand, and said:—

"O thou young man, the air of Heaven is soft,
And warm, and pleasant; but the grave is cold.
Heaven's air is better than the cold dead grave.
Behold me: I am vast, and clad in iron,
And tried; and I have stood on many a field
Of blood, and I have fought with many a foe:
Never was that field lost, or that foe sav'd.
O Sohrab, wherefore wilt thou rush on death?
Be govern'd: quit the Tartar host, and come
To Iran, and be as my son to me,
And fight beneath my banner till I die.
There are no youths in Iran brave as thou."

So he spake, mildly: Sohrab heard his voice,
The mighty voice of Rustum; and he saw
His giant figure planted on the sand,
Sole, like some single tower, which a chief
Has builded on the waste in former years
Against the robbers; and he saw that head,
Streak'd with its first grey hairs; hope fill'd his soul;
And he ran forward and embrac'd his knees,
And clasp'd his hand within his own, and said:—

"Oh, by thy father's head! by thine own soul!
Art thou not Rustum? Speak! art thou not he?"
But Rustum ey'd askance the kneeling youth,
And turn'd away, and spoke to his own soul:—

"Ah me, I muse what this young fox may mean.
False, wily, boastful, are these Tartar boys.
For if I now confess this thing he asks,
And hide it not, but say—*Rustum is here*—
He will not yield indeed, nor quit our foes,
But he will find some pretext not to fight,
And praise my fame, and proffer courteous gifts,
A belt or sword perhaps, and go his way.

And on a feast day, in Afrasiab's hall,
In Samarcand, he will arise and cry—
'I challeng'd once, when the two armies camp'd
Beside the Oxus, all the Persian lords
To cope with me in single fight; but they
Shrank; only Rustum dar'd: then he and I
Chang'd gifts, and went on equal terms away.'
So will he speak, perhaps, while men applaud.
Then were the chiefs of Iran sham'd through me."

And then he turn'd, and sternly spake aloud:—
"Rise! wherefore dost thou vainly question thus
Of Rustum? I am here, whom thou hast call'd
By challenge forth: make good thy vaunt, or yield.
Is it with Rustum only thou wouldst fight?
Rash boy, men look on Rustum's face and flee.
For well I know, that did great Rustum stand
Before thy face this day, and were reveal'd,
There would be then no talk of fighting more.
But being what I am, I tell thee this;
Do thou record it in thine inmost soul:
Either thou shalt renounce thy vaunt, and yield;
Or else thy bones shall strew this sand, till winds
Bleach them, or Oxus with his summer floods,
Oxus in summer wash them all away."

He spoke: and Sohrab answer'd, on his feet:—
"Art thou so fierce? Thou wilt not fright me so.
I am no girl, to be made pale by words.
Yet this thou hast said well, did Rustum stand
Here on this field, there were no fighting then.
But Rustum is far hence, and we stand here.
Begin: thou art more vast, more dread than I,
And thou art prov'd, I know, and I am young—
But yet success sways with the breath of Heaven.
And though thou thinkest that thou knowest sure
Thy victory, yet thou canst not surely know.
For we are all, like swimmers in the sea,
Pois'd on the top of a huge wave of Fate,

Which hangs uncertain to which side to fall.
And whether it will heave us up to land,
Or whether it will roll us out to sea,
Back out to sea, to the deep waves of death,
We know not, and no search will make us know:
Only the event will teach us in its hour."

He spoke; and Rustum answer'd not, but hurl'd
His spear: down from the shoulder, down it came,
As on some partridge in the corn a hawk
That long has tower'd in the airy clouds
Drops like a plummet: Sohrab saw it come,
And sprang aside, quick as a flash: the spear
Hiss'd, and went quivering down into the sand,
Which it sent flying wide:—then Sohrab threw
In turn, and full struck Rustum's shield: sharp rang,
The iron plates rang sharp, but turn'd the spear.
And Rustum seiz'd his club, which none but he
Could wield: an unlopp'd trunk it was, and huge,
Still rough; like those which men in treeless plains
To build them boats fish from the flooded rivers,
Hyphasis or Hydaspes, when, high up
By their dark springs, the wind in winter-time
Has made in Himalayan forests wrack,
And strewn the channels with torn boughs; so huge
The club which Rustum lifted now, and struck
One stroke; but again Sohrab sprang aside
Lithe as the glancing snake, and the club came
Thundering to earth, and leapt from Rustum's hand.
And Rustum follow'd his own blow, and fell
To his knees, and with his fingers clutched the sand:
And now might Sohrab have unsheath'd his sword,
And pierc'd the mighty Rustum while he lay
Dizzy, and on his knees, and chok'd with sand:
But he look'd on, and smil'd, nor bar'd his sword,
But courteously drew back, and spoke, and said:—

"Thou strik'st too hard: that club of thine will float
Upon the summer floods, and not my bones.

But rise, and be not wroth; not wroth am I:
No, when I see thee, wrath forsakes my soul.
Thou say'st, thou art not Rustum: be it so.
Who art thou, then, that canst so touch my soul?
Boy as I am, I have seen battles, too;
Have waded foremost in their bloody waves,
And heard their hollow roar of dying men;
But never was my heart thus touch'd before.
Are they from Heaven, these softenings of the heart?
O thou old warrior, let us yield to Heaven!
Come, plant we here in earth our angry spears,
And make a truce, and sit upon this sand,
And pledge each other in red wine, like friends,
And thou shalt talk to me of Rustum's deeds.
There are enough foes in the Persian host
Whom I may meet, and strike, and feel no pang;
Champions enough Afrasiab has, whom thou
Mayst fight; fight them, when they confront thy spear.
But oh, let there be peace 'twixt thee and me!"

He ceas'd: but while he spake, Rustum had risen
And stood erect, trembling with rage; his club
He left to lie, but had regain'd his spear,
Whose fiery point now in his mail'd right hand
Blaz'd bright and baleful, like that autumn star,
The baleful sign of fevers: dust had soil'd
His stately crest, and dimm'd his glittering arms.
His breast heav'd; his lips foam'd; and twice his voice
Was chok'd with rage: at last these words broke way:—

"Girl! nimble with thy feet, not with thy hands!
Curl'd minion, dancer, coiner of sweet words!
Fight; let me hear thy hateful voice no more!
Thou art not in Afrasiab's gardens now
With Tartar girls, with whom thou art wont to dance;
But on the Oxus sands, and in the dance
Of battle, and with me, who make no play
Of war: I fight it out, and hand to hand.
Speak not to me of truce, and pledge, and wine!

Remember all thy valour: try thy feints
And cunning: all the pity I had is gone:
Because thou hast sham'd me before both the hosts
With thy light skipping tricks, and thy girl's wiles."

He spoke; and Sohrab kindled at his taunts,
And he too drew his sword: at once they rush'd
Together, as two eagles on one prey
Come rushing down together from the clouds,
One from the east, one from the west: their shields
Dash'd with a clang together, and a din
Rose, such as that the sinewy woodcutters
Make often in the forest's heart at morn,
Of hewing axes, crashing trees; such blows
Rustum and Sohrab on each other hail'd.
And you would say that sun and stars took part
In that unnatural conflict; for a cloud
Grew suddenly in Heaven, and dark'd the sun
Over the fighters' heads; and a wind rose
Under their feet, and moaning swept the plain,
And in a sandy whirlwind wrapp'd the pair.
In gloom they twain were wrapp'd, and they alone;
For both the onlooking hosts on either hand
Stood in broad daylight, and the sky was pure,
And the sun sparkled on the Oxus stream.
But in the gloom they fought, with bloodshot eyes
And labouring breath; first Rustum struck the shield
Which Sohrab held stiff out: the steel-spik'd spear
Rent the tough plates, but fail'd to reach the skin,
And Rustum pluck'd it back with angry groan.
Then Sohrab with his sword smote Rustum's helm,
Nor clove its steel quite through; but all the crest
He shore away, and that proud horsehair plume,
Never till now defil'd, sunk to the dust;
And Rustum bow'd his head; but then the gloom
Grew blacker: thunder rumbled in the air,
And lightnings rent the cloud; and Ruksh, the horse,
Who stood at hand, utter'd a dreadful cry:
No horse's cry was that, most like the roar

Of some pain'd desert lion, who all day
Has trail'd the hunter's javelin in his side,
And comes at night to die upon the sand:—
The two hosts heard that cry, and quak'd for fear,
And Oxus curdled as it cross'd his stream.
But Sohrab heard, and quail'd not, but rush'd on,
And struck again; and again Rustum bow'd
His head; but this time all the blade, like glass,
Sprang in a thousand shivers on the helm,
And in his hand the hilt remain'd alone.

Then Rustum rais'd his head: his dreadful eyes
Glar'd, and he shook on high his menacing spear,
And shouted, "*Rustum!*" Sohrab heard that shout,
And shrank amaz'd: back he recoil'd one step,
And scann'd with blinking eyes the advancing form:
And then he stood bewilder'd; and he dropp'd
His covering shield, and the spear pierc'd his side.
He reel'd, and staggering back, sunk to the ground.
And then the gloom dispers'd, and the wind fell,
And the bright sun broke forth, and melted all
The cloud; and the two armies saw the pair;
Saw Rustum standing, safe upon his feet,
And Sohrab, wounded, on the bloody sand.

Then, with a bitter smile, Rustum began:—
"Sohrab, thou thoughtest in thy mind to kill
A Persian lord this day, and strip his corpse,
And bear thy trophies to Afrasiab's tent.
Or else that the great Rustum would come down
Himself to fight, and that thy wiles would move
His heart to take a gift, and let thee go.
And then that all the Tartar host would praise
Thy courage or thy craft, and spread thy fame,
To glad thy father in his weak old age.
Fool! thou art slain, and by an unknown man!
Dearer to the red jackals shalt thou be,
Than to thy friends, and t[illegible]

And, with a fearless mien, Sohrab replied:—
"Unknown thou art; yet thy fierce vaunt is vain,
Thou dost not slay me, proud and boastful man.
No! Rustum slays me, and this filial heart.
For were I match'd with ten such men as thou,
And I were he who till to-day I was,
They should be lying here, I standing there.
But that beloved name unnerv'd my arm—
That name, and something, I confess, in thee,
Which troubles all my heart, and made my shield
Fall; and thy spear transfix'd an unarm'd foe.
And now thou boastest, and insult'st my fate.
But hear thou this, fierce man, tremble to hear!
The mighty Rustum shall avenge my death!
My father, whom I seek through all the world,
He shall avenge my death, and punish thee!"

As when some hunter in the spring hath found
A breeding eagle sitting on her nest,
Upon the craggy isle of a hill lake,
And pierc'd her with an arrow as she rose,
And follow'd her to find her where she fell
Far off;—anon her mate comes winging back
From hunting, and a great way off descries
His huddling young left sole; at that, he checks
His pinion, and with short uneasy sweeps
Circles above his eyry, with loud screams
Chiding his mate back to her nest; but she
Lies dying, with the arrow in her side,
In some far stony gorge out of his ken,
A heap of fluttering feathers: never more
Shall the lake glass her, flying over it;
Never the black and dripping precipices
Echo her stormy scream as she sails by:—
As that poor bird flies home, nor knows his loss—
So Rustum knew not his own loss, but stood
Over his dying son, and knew him not.

But with a cold, incredulous voice, he said:—
"What prate is this of fathers and revenge?
The mighty Rustum never had a son."

And, with a failing voice, Sohrab replied:—
"Ah yes, he had! and that lost son am I.
Surely the news will one day reach his ear,
Reach Rustum, where he sits, and tarries long,
Somewhere, I know not where, but far from here;
And pierce him like a stab, and make him leap
To arms, and cry for vengeance upon thee.
Fierce man, bethink thee, for an only son!
What will that grief, what will that vengeance be!
Oh, could I live, till I that grief had seen!
Yet him I pity not so much, but her,
My mother, who in Ader-baijan dwells
With that old King, her father, who grows grey
With age, and rules over the valiant Koords.
Her most I pity, who no more will see
Sohrab returning from the Tartar camp,
With spoils and honour, when the war is done.
But a dark rumour will be bruited up,
From tribe to tribe, until it reach her ear;
And then will that defenceless woman learn
That Sohrab will rejoice her sight no more:
But that in battle with a nameless foe,
By the far distant Oxus, he is slain."

He spoke; and as he ceas'd he wept aloud,
Thinking of her he left, and his own death.
He spoke; but Rustum listen'd, plung'd in thought.
Nor did he yet believe it was his son
Who spoke, although he call'd back names he knew;
For he had had sure tidings that the babe,
Which was in Ader-baijan born to him,
Had been a puny girl, no boy at all:
So that sad mother sent him word, for fear
Rustum should take the boy, to train in arms;
And so he deem'd that either Sohrab took,

By a false boast, the style of Rustum's son;
Or that men gave it him, to swell his fame.
So deem'd he; yet he listen'd, plung'd in thought;
And his soul set to grief, as the vast tide
Of the bright rocking ocean sets to shore
At the full moon: tears gather'd in his eyes;
For he remember'd his own early youth,
And all its bounding rapture; as, at dawn,
The Shepherd from his mountain lodge descries
A far bright City, smitten by the sun,
Through many rolling clouds;—so Rustum saw
His youth, saw Sohrab's mother, in her bloom;
And that old King, her father, who lov'd well
His wandering guest, and gave him his fair child
With joy; and all the pleasant life they led,
They three, in that long-distant summer time—
The castle, and the dewy woods, and hunt
And hound, and morn on those delightful hills
In Ader-baijan. And he saw that Youth,
Of age and looks to be his own dear son,
Piteous and lovely, lying on the sand,
Like some rich hyacinth, which by the scythe
Of an unskilful gardener has been cut,
Mowing the garden grass-plots near its bed,
And lies, a fragrant tower of purple bloom,
On the mown, dying grass;—so Sohrab lay,
Lovely in death, upon the common sand.
And Rustum gaz'd on him with grief, and said:—

"O Sohrab, thou indeed art such a son
Whom Rustum, wert thou his, might well have lov'd!
Yet here thou errest, Sohrab, or else men
Have told thee false;—thou art not Rustum's son.
For Rustum had no son: one child he had—
But one—a girl; who with her mother now
Plies some light female task, nor dreams of us—
Of us she dreams not, nor of wounds, nor war."

But Sohrab answer'd him in wrath; for now
The anguish of the deep-fix'd spear grew fierce,

And he desired to draw forth the steel,
And let the blood flow free, and so to die;
But first he would convince his stubborn foe—
And, rising sternly on one arm, he said:—

"Man, who art thou who dost deny my words?
Truth sits upon the lips of dying men,
And Falsehood, while I liv'd, was far from mine.
I tell thee, prick'd upon this arm I bear
That seal which Rustum to my mother gave,
That she might prick it on the babe she bore."

He spoke: and all the blood left Rustum's cheeks;
And his knees totter'd, and he smote his hand
Against his breast, his heavy mailed hand,
That the hard iron corslet clank'd aloud:
And to his heart he press'd the other hand,
And in a hollow voice he spake, and said:—

"Sohrab, that were a proof which could not lie.
If thou shew this, then art thou Rustum's son."

Then, with weak hasty fingers, Sohrab loos'd
His belt, and near the shoulder bar'd his arm,
And show'd a sign in faint vermilion points
Prick'd: as a cunning workman, in Pekin,
Pricks with vermilion some clear porcelain vase,
An emperor's gift—at early morn he paints,
And all day long, and, when night comes, the lamp
Lights up his studious forehead and thin hands:—
So delicately prick'd the sign appear'd
On Sohrab's arm, the sign of Rustum's seal.
It was that Griffin, which of old rear'd Zal,
Rustum's great father, whom they left to die,
A helpless babe, among the mountain rocks.
Him that kind creature found, and rear'd, and lov'd—
Then Rustum took it for his glorious sign.
And Sohrab bar'd that figure on his arm,
And himself scann'd it long with mournful eyes,
And then he touch'd it with his hand and said:—

"How say'st thou? Is that sign the proper sign
Of Rustum's son, or of some other man's?"

He spoke: but Rustum gaz'd, and gaz'd, and stood
Speechless, and then he utter'd one short cry—
O Boy—thy Father!—and his voice chok'd there.
And then a dark cloud pass'd before his eyes,
And his head swam, and he sunk down to earth.
But Sohrab crawl'd to where he lay, and cast
His arms about his neck, and kiss'd his lips,
And with fond faltering fingers strok'd his cheeks,
Trying to call him back to life: and life
Came back to Rustum, and he op'd his eyes,
And they stood wide with horror; and he seiz'd
In both his hands the dust which lay around,
And threw it on his head, and smirch'd his hair,
His hair, and face, and beard, and glittering arms:
And strong convulsive groanings shook his breast,
And his sobs chok'd him; and he clutch'd his sword,
To draw it, and for ever let life out.
But Sohrab saw his thought, and held his hands,
And with a soothing voice he spoke, and said:—

"Father, forbear: for I but meet to-day
The doom that at my birth was written down
In Heaven, and thou art Heaven's unconscious hand.
Surely my heart cried out that it was thou,
When first I saw thee; and thy heart spoke too,
I know it: but Fate trod those promptings down
Under its iron heel; Fate, Fate engag'd
The strife, and hurl'd me on my father's spear.
But let us speak no more of this: I find
My father; let me feel that I have found.
Come, sit beside me on this sand, and take
My head betwixt thy hands, and kiss my cheeks,
And wash them with thy tears, and say, 'My son!'
Quick! quick! for number'd are my sands of life,
And swift; for like the lightning to this field

I came, and like the wind I go away—
Sudden, and swift, and like a passing wind.
But it was writ in Heaven that this should be."

So said he: and his voice releas'd the heart
Of Rustum, and his tears broke forth; he cast
His arms around his son's neck, and wept aloud,
And kiss'd him. And awe fell on both the hosts
When they saw Rustum's grief: and Ruksh, the horse,
With his head bowing to the ground, and mane
Sweeping the dust, came near, and in mute woe
First to the one then to the other mov'd
His head, as if enquiring what their grief
Might mean; and from his dark, compassionate eyes,
The big warm tears roll'd down, and cak'd the sand.
But Rustum chid him with stern voice, and said:—

"Ruksh, now thou grievest; but, O Ruksh, thy feet
Should then have rotted on thy nimble joints,
When first they bore thy Master to this field."

But Sohrab look'd upon the horse and said:—
"Is this then Ruksh? How often, in past days,
My mother told me of thee, thou brave Steed!
My terrible father's terrible horse; and said,
That I should one day find thy lord and thee.
Come, let me lay my hand upon thy mane.
O Ruksh, thou art more fortunate than I;
For thou hast gone where I shall never go,
And snuff'd the breezes of my father's home.
And thou hast trod the sands of Seistan,
And seen the River of Helmund, and the Lake
Of Zirrah; and the aged Zal himself
Has often strok'd thy neck, and given thee food,
Corn in a golden platter soak'd with wine,
And said—'O Ruksh! bear Rustum well!'—but I
Have never known my grandsire's furrow'd face,
Nor seen his lofty house in Seistan,
Nor slak'd my thirst at the clear Helmund stream:

But lodg'd among my father's foes, and seen
Afrasiab's cities only, Samarcand,
Bokhara, and lone Khiva in the waste,
And the black Toorkmun tents; and only drunk
The desert rivers, Moorghab and Tejend,
Kohik, and where the Kalmuks feed their sheep,
The northern Sir; and this great Oxus stream—
The yellow Oxus, by whose brink I die."

And, with a heavy groan, Rustum replied:—
"Oh that its waves were flowing over me!
Oh that I saw its grains of yellow silt
Roll tumbling in the current o'er my head!"

And, with a grave mild voice, Sohrab replied:—
"Desire not that, my father; thou must live.
For some are born to do great deeds, and live,
As some are born to be obscur'd, and die.
Do thou the deeds I die too young to do,
And reap a second glory in thine age.
Thou art my father, and thy gain is mine.
But come: thou seest this great host of men
Which follow me; I pray thee, slay not these:
Let me entreat for them: what have they done?
They follow'd me, my hope, my fame, my star.
Let them all cross the Oxus back in peace.
But me thou must bear hence, not send with them,
But carry me with thee to Seistan,
And place me on a bed, and mourn for me,
Thou, and the snow-hair'd Zal, and all thy friends.
And thou must lay me in that lovely earth,
And heap a stately mound above my bones,
And plant a far-seen pillar over all:
That so the passing horseman on the waste
May see my tomb a great way off, and say—
Sohrab, the mighty Rustum's son, lies there,
Whom his great father did in ignorance kill—
And I be not forgotten in my grave."

And, with a mournful voice, Rustum replied:—
"Fear not; as thou hast said, Sohrab, my son,
So shall it be: for I will burn my tents,
And quit the host, and bear thee hence with me,
And carry thee away to Seistan,
And place thee on a bed, and mourn for thee,
With the snow-headed Zal, and all my friends.
And I will lay thee in that lovely earth,
And heap a stately mound above thy bones,
And plant a far-seen pillar over all:
And men shall not forget thee in thy grave.
And I will spare thy host: yea, let them go:
Let them all cross the Oxus back in peace.
What should I do with slaying any more?
For would that all whom I have ever slain
Might be once more alive; my bitterest foes,
And they who were call'd champions in their time,
And through whose death I won that fame I have;
And I were nothing but a common man,
A poor, mean soldier, and without renown;
So thou mightest live too, my Son, my Son!
Or rather would that I, even I myself,
Might now be lying on this bloody sand,
Near death, and by an ignorant stroke of thine,
Not thou of mine; and I might die, not thou;
And I, not thou, be borne to Seistan;
And Zal might weep above my grave, not thine;
And say—*O son, I weep thee not too sore,*
For willingly, I know, thou met'st thine end.—
But now in blood and battles was my youth,
And full of blood and battles is my age;
And I shall never end this life of blood."

Then, at the point of death, Sohrab replied:—
"A life of blood indeed, thou dreadful man;
But thou shalt yet have peace; only not now,
Not yet: but thou shalt have it on that day,
When thou shalt sail in a high-masted ship,
Thou and the other peers of Kai-Khosroo,
Returning home over the salt blue sea."

And Rustum gaz'd on Sohrab's face, and said:—
"Soon be that day, my Son, and deep that sea!
Till then, if Fate so wills, let me endure."

He spoke; and Sohrab smil'd on him, and took
The spear, and drew it from his side, and eas'd
His wound's imperious anguish: but the blood
Came welling from the open gash, and life
Flow'd with the stream: all down his cold white side
The crimson torrent ran, dim now, and soil'd,
Like the soil'd tissue of white violets
Left, freshly gather'd, on their native bank,
By romping children, whom their nurses call
From the hot fields at noon: his head droop'd low,
His limbs grew slack; motionless, white, he lay—
White, with eyes clos'd; only when heavy gasps,
Deep, heavy gasps, quivering through all his frame,
Convuls'd him back to life, he open'd them,
And fix'd them feebly on his father's face:
Till now all strength was ebb'd, and from his limbs
Unwillingly the spirit fled away,
Regretting the warm mansion which it left,
And youth and bloom, and this delightful world.

So, on the bloody sand, Sohrab lay dead.
And the great Rustum drew his horseman's cloak
Down o'er his face, and sate by his dead son.
As those black granite pillars, once high-rear'd
By Jemshid in Persepolis, to bear
His house, now, mid their broken flights of steps,
Lie prone, enormous, down the mountain side—
So in the sand lay Rustum by his son.

And night came down over the solemn waste,
And the two gazing hosts, and that sole pair,
And darken'd all; and a cold fog, with night,
Crept from the Oxus. Soon a hum arose,
As of a great assembly loos'd, and fires
Began to twinkle through the fog; for now

Both armies mov'd to camp, and took their meal:
The Persians took it on the open sands
Southward; the Tartars by the river marge:
And Rustum and his son were left alone.

But the majestic River floated on,
Out of the mist and hum of that low land,
Into the frosty starlight, and there mov'd,
Rejoicing, through the hush'd Chorasmian waste,
Under the solitary moon: he flow'd
Right for the Polar Star, past Orgunjè,
Brimming, and bright, and large: then sands begin
To hem his watery march, and dam his streams,
And split his currents; that for many a league
The shorn and parcell'd Oxus strains along
Through beds of sand and matted rushy isles—
Oxus, forgetting the bright speed he had
In his high mountain cradle in Pamere,
A foil'd circuitous wanderer:—till at last
The long'd-for dash of waves is heard, and wide
His luminous home of waters opens, bright
And tranquil, from whose floor the new-bath'd stars
Emerge, and shine upon the Aral Sea.

BALDER DEAD.

AN EPISODE.

I. Sending.

So on the floor lay Balder dead; and round
Lay thickly strewn swords, axes, darts, and spears,
Which all the Gods in sport had idly thrown
At Balder, whom no weapon piere'd or clove:
But in his breast stood fixt the fatal bough
Of mistletoe, which Lok the Accuser gave
To Hoder, and unwitting Hoder threw:

'Gainst that alone had Balder's life no charm.
And all the Gods and all the Heroes came
And stood round Balder on the bloody floor
Weeping and wailing; and Valhalla rang
Up to its golden roof with sobs and cries:
And on the tables stood the untasted meats,
And in the horns and gold-rimm'd skulls the wine:
And now would night have fall'n and found them yet
Wailing; but otherwise was Odin's will:
And thus the Father of the Ages spake:—

"Enough of tears, ye Gods, enough of wail!
Not to lament in was Valhalla made.
If any here might weep for Balder's death
I most might weep, his Father; such a son
I lose to-day, so bright, so lov'd a God.
But he has met that doom which long ago
The Nornies, when his mother bear him, spun,
And Fate set seal, that so his end must be.
Balder has met his death, and ye survive:
Weep him an hour; but what can grief avail?
For you yourselves, ye Gods, shall meet your doom,
All ye who hear me, and inhabit Heaven,
And I too, Odin too, the Lord of all;
But ours we shall not meet, when that day comes,
With woman's tears and weak complaining cries—
Why should we meet another's portion so?
Rather it fits you, having wept your hour,
With cold dry eyes, and hearts compos'd and stern,
To live, as erst, your daily life in Heaven:
By me shall vengeance on the murderer Lok,
The Foe, the Accuser, whom, though Gods, we hate,
Be strictly car'd for, in the appointed day.
Meanwhile, to-morrow, when the morning dawns,
Bring wood to the seashore to Balder's ship,
And on the deck build high a funeral pile,
And on the top lay Balder's corpse, and put
Fire to the wood, and send him out to sea
To burn; for that is what the dead desire."

So having spoke, the King of Gods arose
And mounted his horse Sleipner, whom he rode,
And from the hall of Heaven he rode away
To Lidskialf, and sate upon his throne,
The mount, from whence his eye surveys the world.
And far from Heaven he turn'd his shining orbs
To look on Midgard, and the earth, and men:
And on the conjuring Lapps he bent his gaze
Whom antler'd reindeer pull over the snow:
And on the Finns, the gentlest of mankind,
Fair men, who live in holes under the ground:
Nor did he look once more to Ida's plain,
Nor towards Valhalla, and the sorrowing Gods;
For well he knew the Gods would heed his word,
And cease to mourn, and think of Balder's pyre.

But in Valhalla all the Gods went back
From around Balder, all the Heroes went;
And left his body stretch'd upon the floor.
And on their golden chairs they sate again,
Beside the tables, in the hall of Heaven;
And before each the cooks who serv'd them plac'd
New messes of the boar Serimner's flesh,
And the Valkyries crown'd their horns with mead.
So they, with pent-up hearts and tearless eyes,
Wailing no more, in silence ate and drank,
While twilight fell, and sacred night came on.

But the blind Hoder left the feasting Gods
In Odin's hall, and went through Asgard streets,
And past the haven where the Gods have moor'd
Their ships, and through the gate, beyond the wall.
Though sightless, yet his own mind led the God.
Down to the margin of the roaring sea
He came, and sadly went along the sand
Between the waves and black o'erhanging cliffs
Where in and out the screaming seafowl fly;
Until he came to where a gully breaks
Through the cliff wall, and a fresh stream runs down

From the high moors behind, and meets the sea.
There in the glen Fensaler stands, the house
Of Frea, honour'd mother of the Gods,
And shews its lighted windows to the main.
There he went up, and pass'd the open doors:
And in the hall he found those women old,
The Prophetesses, who by rite eterne
On Frea's hearth feed high the sacred fire
Both night and day; and by the inner wall
Upon her golden chair the Mother sate,
With folded hands, revolving things to come:
To her drew Hoder near, and spake, and said:—

"Mother, a child of bale thou bar'st in me.
For, first, thou barest me with blinded eyes,
Sightless and helpless, wandering weak in Heaven;
And, after that, of ignorant witless mind
Thou barest me, and unforeseeing soul:
That I alone must take the branch from Lok,
The Foe, the Accuser, whom, though Gods, we hate,
And cast it at the dear-lov'd Balder's breast.
At whom the Gods in sport their weapons threw—
'Gainst that alone had Balder's life no charm.
Now therefore what to attempt, or whither fly?
For who will bear my hateful sight in Heaven?—
Can I, O Mother, bring them Balder back?
Or—for thou know'st the Fates, and things allow'd—
Can I with Hela's power a compact strike,
And make exchange, and give my life for his?"

He spoke; the Mother of the Gods replied:—
"Hoder, ill-fated, child of bale, my son,
Sightless in soul and eye, what words are these?
That one, long portion'd with his doom of death,
Should change his lot, and fill another's life,
And Hela yield to this, and let him go!
On Balder Death hath laid her hand, not thee;
Nor doth she count this life a price for that.
For many Gods in Heaven, not thou alone,

Would freely die to purchase Balder back,
And wend themselves to Hela's gloomy realm.
For not so gladsome is that life in Heaven
Which Gods and Heroes lead, in feast and fray,
Waiting the darkness of the final times,
That one should grudge its loss for Balder's sake,
Balder their joy, so bright, so lov'd a God.
But Fate withstands, and laws forbid this way.
Yet in my secret mind one way I know,
Nor do I judge if it shall win or fail:
But much must still be tried, which shall but fail."

And the blind Hoder answer'd her, and said:—
"What way is this, O Mother, that thou shew'st?
Is it a matter which a God might try?"

And straight the Mother of the Gods replied:—
"There is a way which leads to Hela's realm,
Untrodden, lonely, far from light and Heaven.
Who goes that way must take no other horse
To ride, but Sleipner, Odin's horse, alone.
Nor must he choose that common path of Gods
Which every day they come and go in Heaven,
O'er the bridge Bifrost, where is Heimdall's watch,
Past Midgard Fortress, down to earth and men;
But he must tread a dark untravell'd road
Which branches from the north of Heaven, and ride
Nine days, nine nights, towards the northern ice,
Through valleys deep-engulph'd, with roaring streams.
And he will reach on the tenth morn a bridge
Which spans with golden arches Giall's stream,
Not Bifrost, but that bridge a damsel keeps,
Who tells the passing troops of dead their way
To the low shore of ghosts, and Hela's realm.
And she will bid him northward steer his course:
Then he will journey through no lighted land,
Nor see the sun arise, nor see it set;
But he must ever watch the northern Bear
Who from her frozen height with jealous eye

Confronts the Dog and Hunter in the south,
And is alone not dipt in Ocean's stream.
And straight he will come down to Ocean's strand;
Ocean, whose watery ring enfolds the world,
And on whose marge the ancient giants dwell.
But he will reach its unknown northern shore,
Far, far beyond the outmost giant's home,
At the chink'd fields of ice, the waste of snow:
And he will fare across the dismal ice
Northward, until he meets a stretching wall
Barring his way, and in the wall a grate.
But then he must dismount, and on the ice
Tighten the girths of Sleipner, Odin's horse,
And make him leap the grate, and come within.
And he will see stretch round him Hela's realm,
The plains of Niflheim, where dwell the dead,
And hear the roaring of the streams of Hell.
And he will see the feeble shadowy tribes,
And Balder sitting crown'd, and Hela's throne.
Then he must not regard the wailful Ghosts
Who all will flit, like eddying leaves, around;
But he must straight accost their solemn Queen,
And pay her homage, and entreat with prayers,
Telling her all that grief they have in Heaven
For Balder, whom she holds by right below:
If haply he may melt her heart with words,
And make her yield, and give him Balder back."

She spoke: but Hoder answered her and said:—
"Mother, a dreadful way is this thou shew'st.
No journey for a sightless God to go."

And straight the Mother of the Gods replied:—
"Therefore thyself thou shalt not go, my son.
But he whom first thou meetest when thou com'st
To Asgard, and declar'st this hidden way,
Shall go, and I will be his guide unseen."

She spoke, and on her face let fall her veil,
And bowed her head, and sate with folded hands.

But at the central hearth those women old
Who while the Mother spake had ceas'd their toil
Began again to heap the sacred fire:
And Hoder turn'd, and left his mother's house,
Fensaler, whose lit windows look to sea;
And came again down to the roaring waves,
And back along the beach to Asgard went,
Pondering on that which Frea said should be.

But night came down, and darken'd Asgard streets,
Then from their loathed feast the Gods arose,
And lighted torches, and took up the corpse
Of Balder from the floor of Odin's hall,
And laid it on a bier, and bare him home
Through the fast-darkening streets to his own house
Breidablik, on whose columns Balder grav'd
The enchantments, that recall the dead to life:
For wise he was, and many curious arts,
Postures of runes, and healing herbs he knew;
Unhappy: but that art he did not know
To keep his own life safe, and see the sun:—
There to his hall the Gods brought Balder home,
And each bespake him as he laid him down:—
"Would that ourselves, O Balder, we were borne
Home to our halls, with torchlight, by our kin,
So thou might'st live, and still delight the Gods."

They spake: and each went home to his own house,
But there was one, the first of all the Gods
For speed, and Hermod was his name in Heaven;
Most fleet he was, but now he went the last,
Heavy in heart for Balder, to his house
Which he in Asgard built him there to dwell,
Against the harbour, by the city wall:
Him the blind Hoder met, as he came up
From the sea cityward, and knew his step;
Nor yet could Hermod see his brother's face,
For it grew dark; but Hoder touch'd his arm:
And as a spray of honeysuckle flowers

Brushes across a tired traveller's face
Who shuffles through the deep dew-moisten'd dust,
On a May evening, in the darken'd lanes,
And starts him, that he thinks a ghost went by—
So Hoder brush'd by Hermod's side, and said:—

"Take Sleipner, Hermod, and set forth with dawn
To Hela's kingdom, to ask Balder back:
And they shall be thy guides, who have the power."

He spake, and brush'd soft by, and disappear'd.
And Hermod gaz'd into the night, and said:—

"Who is it utters through the dark his hest
So quickly, and will wait for no reply?
The voice was like the unhappy Hoder's voice.
Howbeit I will see, and do his hest:
For there rang note divine in that command."

So speaking, the fleet-footed Hermod came
Home, and lay down to sleep in his own house,
And all the Gods lay down in their own homes.
And Hoder too came home, distraught with grief,
Loathing to meet, at dawn, the other Gods:
And he went in, and shut the door, and fixt
His sword upright, and fell on it, and died.

But from the hill of Lidskialf Odin rose,
The throne, from which his eye surveys the world;
And mounted Sleipner, and in darkness rode
To Asgard. And the stars came out in Heaven,
High over Asgard, to light home the King.
But fiercely Odin galloped, mov'd in heart;
And swift to Asgard, to the gate, he came:
And terribly the hoofs of Sleipner rang
Along the flinty floor of Asgard streets;
And the Gods trembled on their golden beds
Hearing the wrathful Father coming home;
For dread, for like a whirlwind, Odin came:

And to Valhalla's gate he rode, and left
Sleipner; and Sleipner went to his own stall:
And in Valhalla Odin laid him down.

But in Breidablik Nanna, Balder's wife,
Came with the Goddesses who wrought her will.
And stood round Balder lying on his bier;
And at his head and feet she station'd Scalds
Who in their lives were famous for their song;
These o'er the corpse inton'd a plaintive strain,
A dirge, and Nanna and her train replied.
And far into the night they wail'd their dirge:
But when their souls were satisfied with wail,
They went, and laid them down, and Nanna went
Into an upper chamber, and lay down:
And Frea seal'd her tired lids with sleep.

And 'twas when Night is bordering hard on Dawn
When air is chilliest, and the stars sunk low,
Then Balder's spirit through the gloom drew near,
In garb, in form, in feature as he was
Alive, and still the rays were round his head
Which were his glorious mark in Heaven; he stood
Over against the curtain of the bed,
And gaz'd on Nanna as she slept, and spake:—

"Poor lamb, thou sleepest, and forgett'st thy woe,
Tears stand upon the lashes of thine eyes,
Tears wet the pillow by thy cheek; but thou,
Like a young child, hast cried thyself to sleep.
Sleep on: I watch thee, and am here to aid.
Alive I kept not far from thee, dear soul,
Neither do I neglect thee now, though dead.
For with to-morrow's dawn the Gods prepare
To gather wood and build a funeral pile
Upon my ship, and burn my corpse with fire,
That sad, sole honour of the dead; and thee
They think to burn, and all my choicest wealth,
With me, for thus ordains the common rite:

But it shall not be so: but mild, but swift,
But painless shall a stroke from Frea come,
To cut thy thread of life, and free thy soul,
And they shall burn thy corpse with mine, not thee.
And well I know that by no stroke of death,
Tardy or swift, wouldst thou be loath to die,
So it restor'd thee, Nanna, to my side,
Whom thou so well hast lov'd: but I can smooth
Thy way, and this at least my prayers avail.
Yes, and I fain would altogether ward
Death from thy head, and with the Gods in Heaven
Prolong thy life, though not by thee desir'd:
But Right bars this, not only thy desire.
Yet dreary, Nanna, is the life they lead
In that dim world, in Hela's mouldering realm;
And doleful are the ghosts, the troops of dead,
Whom Hela with austere control presides;
For of the race of Gods is no one there
Save me alone, and Hela, solemn Queen:
And all the nobler souls of mortal men
On battle-field have met their death, and now
Feast in Valhalla, in my Father's hall;
Only the inglorious sort are there below,
The old, the cowards, and the weak are there,
Men spent by sickness, or obscure decay.
But even there, O Nanna, we might find
Some solace in each other's look and speech,
Wandering together through that gloomy world,
And talking of the life we led in Heaven,
While we yet liv'd, among the other Gods."

He spake, and straight his lineaments began
To fade: and Nanna in her sleep stretch'd out
Her arms towards him with a cry; but he
Mournfully shook his head, and disappear'd.
And as the woodman sees a little smoke
Hang in the air, afield, and disappear—
So Balder faded in the night away,
And Nanna on her bed sunk back: but then

Frea, the Mother of the Gods, with stroke
Painless and swift, set free her airy soul,
Which took, on Balder's track, the way below:
And instantly the sacred Morn appear'd.

II. Journey to the Dead.

Forth from the East, up the ascent of Heaven,
Day drove his courser with the Shining Mane;
And in Valhalla, from his gable perch,
The golden-crested Cock began to crow:
Hereafter, in the blackest dead of night,
With shrill and dismal cries that Bird shall crow,
Warning the Gods that foes draw nigh to Heaven;
But now he crew at dawn, a cheerful note,
To wake the Gods and Heroes to their tasks.
And all the Gods, and all the Heroes, woke.
And from their bed the Heroes rose, and donn'd
Their arms, and led their horses from the stall,
And mounted them, and in Valhalla's court
Were rang'd; and then the daily fray began.
And all day long they there are hack'd and hewn
'Mid dust, and groans, and limbs lopp'd off, and blood;
But all at night return to Odin's hall
Woundless and fresh: such lot is theirs in Heaven.
And the Valkyries on their steeds went forth
Toward Earth and fights of men; and at their side
Skulda, the youngest of the Normies, rode:
And over Bifrost, where is Heimdall's watch,
Past Midgard Fortress, down to Earth they came:
There through some battle-field, where men fall fast,
Their horses fetlock-deep in blood, they ride,
And pick the bravest warriors out for death,
Whom they bring back with them at night to Heaven,
To glad the Gods, and feast in Odin's hall.

But the Gods went not now, as otherwhile,
Into the Tilt-yard, where the Heroes fought,
To feast their eyes with looking on the fray:

Nor did they to their Judgment Place repair
By the ash Igdrasil, in Ida's plain,
Where they hold council, and give laws for men:
But they went, Odin first, the rest behind,
To the hall Gladheim, which is built of gold;
Where are in circle rang'd twelve golden chairs,
And in the midst one higher, Odin's throne:
There all the Gods in silence sate them down;
And thus the Father of the Ages spake:—

"Go quickly, Gods, bring wood to the seashore,
With all, which it beseems the dead to have,
And make a funeral pile on Balder's ship,
On the twelfth day the Gods shall burn his corpse.
But Hermod, thou, take Sleipner, and ride down
To Hela's kingdom, to ask Balder back."

So said he; and the Gods arose, and took
Axes and ropes, and at their head came Thor,
Shouldering his Hammer, which the Giants know:
Forth wended they, and drove their steeds before:
And up the dewy mountain tracks they far'd
To the dark forests, in the early dawn;
And up and down and side and slant they roam'd:
And from the glens all day an echo came
Of crashing falls; and with his hammer Thor
Smote 'mid the rocks the lichen-bearded pines
And burst their roots; while to their tops the Gods
Made fast the woven ropes, and hal'd them down,
And lopp'd their boughs, and clove them on the sward,
And bound the logs behind their steeds to draw,
And drove them homeward; and the snorting steeds
Went straining through the crackling brushwood down,
And by the darkening forest paths the Gods
Follow'd, and on their shoulders carried boughs.
And they came out upon the plain, and pass'd
Asgard, and led their horses to the beach,
And loos'd them of their loads on the seashore,
And ranged the wood in stacks by Balder's ship;
And every God went home to his own house.

But when the Gods were to the forest gone
Hermod led Sleipner from Valhalla forth
And saddled him; before that, Sleipner brook'd
No meaner hand than Odin's on his mane,
On his broad back no lesser rider bore:
Yet docile now he stood at Hermod's side,
Arching his neck, and glad to be bestrode,
Knowing the God they went to seek, how dear.
But Hermod mounted him, and sadly far'd,
In silence, up the dark untravell'd road
Which branches from the north of Heaven, and went
All day; and Daylight waned, and Night came on.
And all that night he rode, and journey'd so,
Nine days, nine nights, towards the northern ice,
Through valleys deep engulph'd, by roaring streams:
And on the tenth morn he beheld the bridge
Which spans with golden arches Giall's stream,
And on the bridge a Damsel watching arm'd,
In the straight passage, at the further end,
Where the road issues between walling rocks.
Scant space that warder left for passers by;
But, as when cowherds in October drive
Their kine across a snowy mountain pass
To winter pasture on the southern side,
And on the ridge a waggon chokes the way
Wedg'd in the snow; then painfully the hinds
With goad and shouting urge their cattle past,
Plunging through deep untrodden banks of snow
To right and left, and warm steam fills the air—
So on the bridge that Damsel block'd the way,
And question'd Hermod as he came, and said:—

"Who art thou on thy black and fiery horse
Under whose hoofs the bridge o'er Giall's stream
Rumbles and shakes? Tell me thy race and home.
But yestermorn five troops of dead pass'd by
Bound on their way below to Hela's realm,
Nor shook the bridge so much as thou alone.
And thou hast flesh and colour on thy cheeks

Like men who live and draw the vital air;
Nor look'st thou pale and wan, like men deceas'd,
Souls bound below, my daily passers here."

And the fleet-footed Hermod answer'd her:—
"O Damsel, Hermod am I call'd, the son
Of Odin; and my high-roof'd house is built
Far hence, in Asgard, in the City of Gods:
And Sleipner, Odin's horse, is this I ride.
And I come, sent this road on Balder's track:
Say then, if he hath cross'd thy bridge or no?"

He spake; the warder of the bridge replied:—
"O Hermod, rarely do the feet of Gods
Or of the horses of the Gods resound
Upon my bridge; and, when they cross, I know.
Balder hath gone this way, and ta'en the road
Below there, to the north, toward Hela's realm.
From here the cold white mist can be discern'd,
Not lit with sun, but through the darksome air
By the dim, vapour-blotted light of stars,
Which hangs over the ice where lies the road.
For in that ice are lost those northern streams
Freezing and ridging in their onward flow,
Which from the fountain of Vergelmer run,
The spring that bubbles up by Hela's throne.
There are the joyless seats, the haunt of ghosts,
Hela's pale swarms; and there was Balder bound.
Ride on; pass free: but he by this is there."

She spake, and stepp'd aside, and left him room.
And Hermod greeted her, and gallop'd by
Across the bridge; then she took post again.
But northward Hermod rode, the way below:
And o'er a darksome tract, which knows no sun,
But by the blotted light of stars, he far'd;
And he came down to Ocean's northern strand
At the drear ice, beyond the Giants' home:
Thence on he journey'd o'er the fields of ice
Still north, until he met a stretching wall

Barring his way, and in the wall a grate.
Then he dismounted, and drew tight the girths,
On the smooth ice, of Sleipner, Odin's horse,
And made him leap the grate, and came within.
And he beheld spread round him Hela's realm,
The plains of Niflheim, where dwell the dead,
And heard the thunder of the streams of Hell.
For near the wall the river of Roaring flows,
Outmost: the others near the centre run—
The Storm, the Abyss, the Howling, and the Pain:
These flow by Hela's throne, and near their spring.
And from the dark flock'd up the shadowy tribes:
And as the swallows crowd the bulrush-beds
Of some clear river, issuing from a lake,
On autumn days, before they cross the sea;
And to each bulrush-crest a swallow hangs
Swinging, and others skim the river streams,
And their quick twittering fills the banks and shores—
So around Hermod swarm'd the twittering ghosts.
Women, and infants, and young men who died
Too soon for fame, with white ungraven shields;
And old men, known to Glory, but their star
Betray'd them, and of wasting age they died,
Not wounds: yet, dying, they their armour wore,
And now have chief regard in Hela's realm.
Behind flock'd wrangling up a piteous crew,
Greeted of none, disfeatur'd and forlorn—
Cowards, who were in sloughs interr'd alive:
And round them still the wattled hurdles hung
Wherewith they stamped them down, and trod them deep,
To hide their shameful memory from men.
But all he pass'd unhail'd, and reach'd the throne
Of Hela, and saw, near it, Balder crown'd,
And Hela sat thereon, with countenance stern;
And thus bespake him first the solemn Queen:—

"Unhappy, how hast thou endur'd to leave
The light, and journey to the cheerless land
Where idly flit about the feeble shades?

How didst thou cross the bridge o'er Giall's stream,
Being alive, and come to Ocean's shore?
Or how o'erleap the grate that bars the wall?"

She spake; but down off Sleipner Hermod sprang,
And fell before her feet, and clasp'd her knees;
And spake, and mild entreated her, and said:—

"O Hela, wherefore should the Gods declare
Their errands to each other, or the ways
They go? the errand and the way is known.
Thou know'st, thou know'st, what grief we have in Heaven
For Balder, whom thou hold'st by right below:
Restore him, for what part fulfils he here?
Shall he shed cheer over the cheerless seats,
And touch the apathetic ghosts with joy?
Not for such end, O Queen, thou hold'st thy realm.
For Heaven was Balder born, the City of Gods
And Heroes, where they live in light and joy:
Thither restore him, for his place is there."

He spoke; and grave replied the solemn Queen:—
"Hermod, for he thou art, thou Son of Heaven!
A strange unlikely errand, sure, is thine.
Do the Gods send to me to make them blest?
Small bliss my race hath of the Gods obtain'd.
Three mighty children to my Father Lok
Did Angerbode, the Giantess, bring forth—
Fenris the Wolf, the Serpent huge, and Me:
Of these the Serpent in the sea ye cast,
Who since in your despite hath wax'd amain,
And now with gleaming ring enfolds the world:
Me on this cheerless nether world ye threw
And gave me nine unlighted realms to rule:
While on his island in the lake, afar,
Made fast to the bor'd crag, by will not strength
Subdu'd, with limber chains lives Fenris bound.
Lok still subsists in Heaven, our Father wise,
Your mate, though loath'd, and feasts in Odin's hall;

But him too foes await, and netted snares,
And in a cave a bed of needle rocks,
And o'er his visage serpents dropping gall.
Yet he shall one day rise, and burst his bonds,
And with himself set us his offspring free,
When he guides Muspel's children to their bourne.
Till then in peril or in pain we live,
Wrought by the Gods: and ask the Gods our aid?
Howbeit we abide our day: till then,
We do not as some feebler haters do,
Seek to afflict our foes with petty pangs,
Helpless to better us, or ruin them.
Come then; if Balder was so dear belov'd,
And this is true, and such a loss is Heaven's—
Hear, how to Heaven may Balder be restor'd.
Shew me through all the world the signs of grief:
Fails but one thing to grieve, here Balder stops:
Let all that lives and moves upon the earth
Weep him, and all that is without life weep:
Let Gods, men, brutes, beweep him; plants and stones.
So shall I know the lost was dear indeed,
And bend my heart, and give him back to Heaven."

She spake; and Hermod answer'd her, and said:—
"Hela, such as thou say'st, the terms shall be.
But come, declare me this, and truly tell:
May I, ere I depart, bid Balder hail?
Or is it here withheld to greet the dead?"

He spake; and straightway Hela answer'd him:—
"Hermod, greet Balder if thou wilt, and hold
Converse: his speech remains, though he be dead."

And straight to Balder Hermod turn'd and spake:—
"Even in the abode of Death, O Balder, hail!
Thou hear'st, if hearing, like as speech, is thine,
The terms of thy releasement hence to Heaven:
Fear nothing but that all shall be fulfill'd.
For not unmindful of thee are the Gods,

Who see the light, and blest in Asgard dwell;
Even here they seek thee out, in Hela's realm.
And sure of all the happiest far art thou
Who ever have been known in Earth or Heaven:
Alive, thou wast of Gods the most belov'd:
And now thou sittest crown'd by Hela's side,
Here, and hast honour among all the dead."

He spake; and Balder utter'd him reply,
But feebly, as a voice far off; he said:—

"Hermod the nimble, gild me not my death.
Better to live a slave, a captur'd man,
Who scatters rushes in a master's hall,
Than be a crown'd king here, and rule the dead.
And now I count not of these terms as safe
To be fulfill'd, nor my return as sure,
Though I be lov'd, and many mourn my death:
For double-minded ever was the seed
Of Lok, and double are the gifts they give.
Howbeit, report thy message; and therewith,
To Odin, to my Father, take this ring,
Memorial of me, whether sav'd or no:
And tell the Heaven-born Gods how thou hast seen
Me sitting here below by Hela's side,
Crown'd, having honour among all the dead."

He spake, and rais'd his hand, and gave the ring.
And with inscrutable regard the Queen
Of Hell beheld them, and the ghosts stood dumb.
But Hermod took the ring, and yet once more
Kneel'd and did homage to the solemn Queen;
Then mounted Sleipner, and set forth to ride
Back, through the astonish'd tribes of dead, to Heaven.
And to the wall he came, and found the grate
Lifted, and issued on the fields of ice;
And o'er the ice he far'd to Ocean's strand,
And up from thence, a wet and misty road,
To the arm'd Damsel's bridge, and Giall's stream.
Worse was that way to go than to return,

For him: for others all return is barr'd.
Nine days he took to go, two to return;
And on the twelfth morn saw the light of Heaven
And as a traveller in the early dawn
To the steep edge of some great valley comes
Through which a river flows, and sees beneath
Clouds of white rolling vapours fill the vale,
But o'er them, on the farther slope, descries
Vineyards, and crofts, and pastures, bright with sun—
So Hermod, o'er the fog between, saw Heaven.
And Sleipner snorted, for he smelt the air
Of Heaven: and mightily, as wing'd, he flew.
And Hermod saw the towers of Asgard rise:
And he drew near, and heard no living voice
In Asgard; but the golden halls were dumb.
Then Hermod knew what labour held the Gods:
And through the empty streets he rode, and pass'd
Under the gate-house to the sands, and found
The Gods on the sea-shore by Balder's ship.

III. Funeral.

The Gods held talk together, group'd in knots,
Round Balder's corpse, which they had thither borne;
And Hermod came down towards them from the gate.
And Lok, the Father of the Serpent, first
Beheld him come, and to his neighbours spake:—

"See, here is Hermod, who comes single back
From Hell; and shall I tell thee how he seems?
Like as a farmer, who hath lost his dog,
Some morn, at market, in a crowded town—
Through many streets the poor beast runs in vain,
And follows this man after that, for hours,
And, late at evening, spent and panting, falls
Before a stranger's threshold, not his home,
With flanks a-tremble, and his slender tongue
Hangs quivering out between his dust-smear'd jaws,
And piteously he eyes the passers-by:

But home his master comes to his own farm,
Far in the country, wondering where he is—
So Hermod comes to-day unfollow'd home."

And straight his neighbour, mov'd with wrath, replied:—
"Deceiver, fair in form, but false in heart,
Enemy, Mocker, whom, though Gods, we hate—
Peace, lest our Father Odin hear thee gibe.
Would I might see him snatch thee in his hand,
And bind thy carcase, like a bale, with cords,
And hurl thee in a lake, to sink or swim.
If clear from plotting Balder's death, to swim;
But deep, if thou devisedst it, to drown,
And perish, against fate, before thy day!"

So they two soft to one another spake.
But Odin look'd toward the land, and saw
His messenger; and he stood forth, and cried:
And Hermod came, and leapt from Sleipner down,
And in his father's hand put Sleipner's rein,
And greeted Odin and the Gods, and said:—

"Odin, my Father, and ye, Gods of Heaven!
Lo, home, having performed your will, I come.
Into the joyless kingdom have I been,
Below, and look'd upon the shadowy tribes
Of ghosts, and commun'd with their solemn Queen
And to your prayer she sends you this reply:—
Shew her through all the world the signs of grief:
Fails but one thing to grieve, there Balder stops.
Let Gods, men, brutes, beweep him, plants and stones.
So shall she know your loss was dear indeed,
And bend her heart, and give you Balder back."

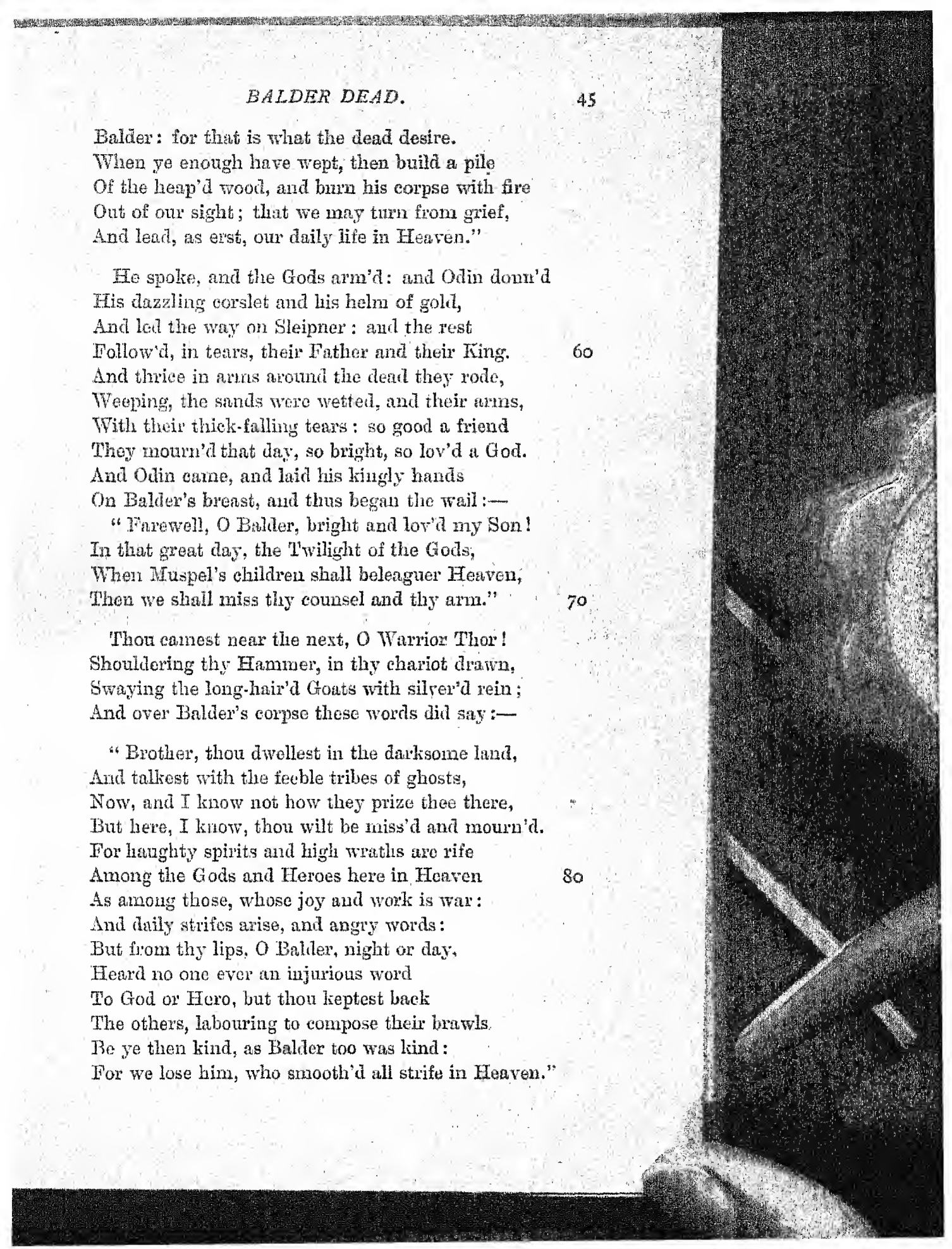
He spoke; and all the Gods to Odin look'd:
And straight the Father of the Ages said:—
"Ye Gods, these terms may keep another day.
But now, put on your arms, and mount your steeds,
And in procession all come near, and weep

Balder: for that is what the dead desire.
When ye enough have wept, then build a pile
Of the heap'd wood, and burn his corpse with fire
Out of our sight; that we may turn from grief,
And lead, as erst, our daily life in Heaven."

He spoke, and the Gods arm'd: and Odin donn'd
His dazzling corslet and his helm of gold,
And led the way on Sleipner: and the rest
Follow'd, in tears, their Father and their King.
And thrice in arms around the dead they rode,
Weeping, the sands were wetted, and their arms,
With their thick-falling tears: so good a friend
They mourn'd that day, so bright, so lov'd a God.
And Odin came, and laid his kingly hands
On Balder's breast, and thus began the wail:—
"Farewell, O Balder, bright and lov'd my Son!
In that great day, the Twilight of the Gods,
When Muspel's children shall beleaguer Heaven,
Then we shall miss thy counsel and thy arm."

Thou camest near the next, O Warrior Thor!
Shouldering thy Hammer, in thy chariot drawn,
Swaying the long-hair'd Goats with silver'd rein;
And over Balder's corpse these words did say:—

"Brother, thou dwellest in the darksome land,
And talkest with the feeble tribes of ghosts,
Now, and I know not how they prize thee there,
But here, I know, thou wilt be miss'd and mourn'd.
For haughty spirits and high wraths are rife
Among the Gods and Heroes here in Heaven
As among those, whose joy and work is war:
And daily strifes arise, and angry words:
But from thy lips, O Balder, night or day,
Heard no one ever an injurious word
To God or Hero, but thou keptest back
The others, labouring to compose their brawls.
Be ye then kind, as Balder too was kind:
For we lose him, who smooth'd all strife in Heaven."



He spake, and all the Gods assenting wail'd.
And Freya next came nigh, with golden tears:
The loveliest Goddess she in Heaven, by all
Most honour'd after Frea, Odin's wife:
Her long ago the wandering Oder took
To mate, but left her to roam distant lands;
Since then she seeks him, and weeps tears of gold:
Names hath she many; Vanadis on earth
They call her, Freya is her name in Heaven:
She in her hands took Balder's head, and spake:—

"Balder, my brother, thou art gone a road
Unknown and long, and haply on that way
My long-lost wandering Oder thou hast met,
For in the paths of Heaven he is not found.
Oh, if it be so, tell him what thou wert
To his neglected wife, and what he is,
And wring his heart with shame, to hear thy word.
For he, my husband, left me here to pine,
Not long a wife, when his unquiet heart
First drove him from me into distant lands.
Since then I vainly seek him through the world,
And weep from shore to shore my golden tears,
But neither god nor mortal heeds my pain.
Thou only, Balder, wert for ever kind,
To take my hand, and wipe my tears, and say:—
Weep not, O Freya, weep no golden tears!
One day the wandering Oder will return,
Or thou wilt find him in thy faithful search
On some great road, or resting in an inn,
Or at a ford, or sleeping by a tree.—
So Balder said; but Oder, well I know,
My truant Oder shall I see no more
To the world's end; and Balder now is gone;
And I am left uncomforted in Heaven."

She spake; and all the Goddesses bewail'd.
Last, from among the Heroes one came near,
No God, but of the Hero-troop the chief—

Regner, who swept the northern sea with fleets,
And ruled o'er Denmark and the heathy isles,
Living; but Ella captur'd him and slew:
A king, whose fame then fill'd the vast of Heaven,
Now time obscures it, and men's later deeds:
He last approach'd the corpse, and spake, and said:—

"Balder, there yet are many Scalds in Heaven
Still left, and that chief Scald, thy brother Brage,
Whom we may bid to sing, though thou art gone:
And all these gladly, while we drink, we hear,
After the feast is done, in Odin's hall:
But they harp ever on one string, and wake
Remembrance in our soul of wars alone,
Such as on earth we valiantly have wag'd,
And blood, and ringing blows, and violent death:
But when thou sangest, Balder, thou didst strike
Another note, and, like a bird in spring,
Thy voice of joyance minded us, and youth,
And wife, and children, and our ancient home.
Yes, and I too remember'd then no more
My dungeon, where the serpents stung me dead,
Nor Ella's victory on the English coast;
But I heard Thora laugh in Gothland Isle;
And saw my shepherdess, Aslauga, tend
Her flock along the white Norwegian beach:
Tears started to mine eyes with yearning joy:
Therefore with grateful heart I mourn thee dead."

So Regner spake, and all the Heroes groan'd.
But now the sun had passed the height of Heaven,
And soon had all that day been spent in wail;
But then the Father of the Ages said:—

"Ye Gods, there well may be too much of wail.
Bring now the gather'd wood to Balder's ship;
Heap on the deck the logs, and build the pyre."
But when the Gods and Heroes heard, they brought
The wood to Balder's ship, and built a pile,

Full the deck's breadth, and lofty; then the corpse
Of Balder on the highest top they laid,
With Nanna on his right, and on his left
Hoder, his brother, whom his own hand slew.
And they set jars of wine and oil to lean
Against the bodies, and stuck torches near,
Splinters of pine-wood, soak'd with turpentine;
And brought his arms and gold, and all his stuff,
And slew the dogs which at his table fed,
And his horse, Balder's horse, whom most he lov'd,
And threw them on the pyre. and Odin threw
A last choice gift thereon, his golden ring.
They fixt the mast, and hoisted up the sails,
Then they put fire to the wood, and Thor
Set his stout shoulder hard against the stern
To push the ship through the thick sand: sparks flew
From the deep trench she plough'd—so strong a God
Furrow'd it—and the water gurgled in.
And the ship floated on the waves, and rock'd:
But in the hills a strong East-Wind arose,
And came down moaning to the sea; first squalls
Ran black o'er the sea's face, then steady rush'd
The breeze, and fill'd the sails, and blew the fire.
And, wreathed in smoke, the Ship stood out to sea.
Soon with a roaring rose the mighty fire,
And the pile crackled; and between the logs
Sharp quivering tongues of flame shot out, and leapt,
Curling and darting, higher, until they lick'd
The summit of the pile, the dead, the mast,
And ate the shrivelling sails; but still the Ship
Drove on, ablaze, above her hull, with fire.
And the Gods stood upon the beach, and gaz'd:
And, while they gazed, the Sun went lurid down
Into the smoke-wrapt sea, and Night came on.
Then the wind fell, with night, and there was calm.
But through the dark they watched the burning Ship
Still carried o'er the distant waters on
Farther and farther, like an Eye of Fire.
And as in the dark night a travelling man

Who bivouacs in a forest 'mid the hills,
Sees suddenly a spire of flame shoot up
Out of the black waste forest, far below,
Which woodcutters have lighted near their lodge
Against the wolves; and all night long it flares:—
So flar'd, in the far darkness, Balder's pyre.
But fainter, as the stars rose high, it burn'd;
The bodies were consum'd, ash chok'd the pile:
And as in a decaying winter fire
A charr'd log, falling, makes a shower of sparks—
So, with a shower of sparks, the pile fell in,
Reddening the sea around; and all was dark.

But the Gods went by starlight up the shore
To Asgard, and sate down in Odin's hall
At table, and the funeral feast began.
All night they ate the boar Serimner's flesh,
And from their horns, with silver rimm'd, drank mead,
Silent, and waited for the sacred Morn.

And Morning over all the world was spread.
Then from their loathed feast the Gods arose,
And took their horses, and set forth to ride
O'er the bridge Bifrost, where is Heimdall's watch,
To the ash Igdrasil, and Ida's plain:
Thor came on foot; the rest on horseback rode.
And they found Mimir sitting by his Fount
Of wisdom, which beneath the ashtree springs;
And saw the Nornies watering the roots
Of that world-shadowing tree with Honey-dew:
There came the Gods, and sate them down on stones:
And thus the Father of the Ages said:—

"Ye Gods, the terms ye know, which Hermod brought.
Accept them or reject them; both have grounds.
Accept them, and they bind us, unfulfill'd,
To leave for ever Balder in the grave,
An unrecover'd prisoner, shade with shades.
By how, ye say, should the fulfilment fail?—
Smooth sound the terms, and light to be fulfill'd;

For dear-belov'd was Balder while he liv'd
In Heaven and Earth, and who would grudge him tears?
But from the traitorous seed of Lok they come,
These terms, and I suspect some hidden fraud.
Bethink ye, Gods, is there no other way?—
Speak, were not this a way, the way for Gods?
If I, if Odin, clad in radiant arms,
Mounted on Sleipner, with the warrior Thor
Drawn in his car beside me, and my sons,
All the strong brood of Heaven, to swell my train,
Should make irruption into Hela's realm,
And set the fields of gloom ablaze with light,
And bring in triumph Balder back to Heaven?"

He spake; and his fierce sons applauded loud.
But Frea, Mother of the Gods, arose,
Daughter and wife of Odin: thus she said:—

"Odin, thou whirlwind, what a threat is this!
Thou threatenest what transcends thy might, even thine.
For of all Powers the mightiest far art thou,
Lord over men on Earth, and Gods in Heaven;
Yet even from thee thyself hath been withheld
One thing; to undo what thou thyself hast rul'd.
For all which hath been fixt, was fixt by thee:
In the beginning, ere the Gods were born,
Before the Heavens were builded, thou didst slay
The Giant Ymir, whom the abyss brought forth,
Thou and thy brethren fierce, the Sons of Bor,
And threw his trunk to choke the abysmal void:
But of his flesh and members thou didst build
The Earth and Ocean, and above them Heaven:
And from the flaming world, where Muspel reigns,
Thou sent'st and fetched'st fire, and madest lights,
Sun, Moon and Stars, which thou hast hung in Heaven,
Dividing clear the paths of night and day:
And Asgard thou didst build, and Midgard Fort:
Then me thou mad'st; of us the Gods were born.
Then, walking by the sea, thou foundest spars

Of wood, and framed'st men, who till the earth
Or on the sea, the field of pirates, sail:
And all the race of Ymir thou didst drown,
Save one, Bergelmer; he on shipboard fled
Thy deluge, and from him the Giants sprang;
But all that brood thou hast remov'd far off,
And set by Ocean's utmost marge to dwell:
But Hela into Niflheim thou threw'st,
And gav'st her nine unlighted worlds to rule,
A Queen, and empire over all the dead.
That empire wilt thou now invade, light up
Her darkness, from her grasp a subject tear?—
Try it; but I, for one, will not applaud.
Nor do I merit, Odin, thou should'st slight
Me and my words, though thou be first in Heaven:
For I, too, am a Goddess, born of thee,
Thine eldest, and of me the Gods are sprung;
And all that is to come I know, but lock
In my own breast, and have to none reveal'd.
Come then; since Hela holds by right her prey,
But offers terms for his release to Heaven,
Accept the chance;—thou canst no more obtain.
Send through the world thy messengers: entreat
All living and unliving things to weep
For Balder; if thou haply thus may'st melt
Hela, and win the lov'd one back to Heaven."

She spake, and on her face let fall her veil,
And bow'd her head, and sate with folded hands.
Nor did the all-ruling Odin slight her word;
Straightway he spake, and thus address'd the Gods:—

"Go quickly forth through all the world, and pray
All living and unliving things to weep
Balder, if haply he may thus be won."

When the Gods heard, they straight arose, and took
Their horses, and rode forth through all the world.
North, south, east, west they struck, and roam'd the world,

Entreating all things to weep Balder's death:
And all that liv'd, and all without life, wept.
And as in winter, when the frost breaks up,
At winter's end, before the spring begins,
And a warm west wind blows, and thaw sets in—
After an hour a dripping sound is heard
In all the forests, and the soft-strewn snow
Under the trees is dibbled thick with holes,
And from the boughs the snowloads shuffle down;
And in fields sloping to the south dark plots
Of grass peep out amid surrounding snow,
And widen, and the peasant's heart is glad—
So through the world was heard a dripping noise
Of all things weeping to bring Balder back.
And there fell joy upon the Gods to hear.
  But Hermod rode with Niord, whom he took
To shew him spits and beaches of the sea
Far off, where some unwarn'd might fail to weep—
Niord, the God of storms, whom fishers know:
Not born in Heaven; he was in Vanheim rear'd,
With men, but lives a hostage with the Gods:
He knows each frith, and every rocky creek
Fring'd with dark pines, and sands where seafowl scream:—
They two scour'd every coast, and all things wept.
And they rode home together, through the wood
Of Jarnvid, which to east of Midgard lies
Bordering the Giants, where the trees are iron;
There in a wood before a cave they came
Where sate, in the cave's mouth, a skinny Hag,
Toothless and old; she gibes the passers by:
Thok is she call'd; but now Lok wore her shape:
She greeted them the first, and laugh'd, and said:—

"Ye Gods, good lack, is it so dull in Heaven,
That ye come pleasuring to Thok's Iron Wood?
Lovers of change ye are, fastidious sprites.
Look, as in some boor's yard a sweet-breath'd cow
Whose manger is stuff'd full of good fresh hay

Snuffs at it daintily, and stoops her head
To chew the straw, her litter, at her feet—
So ye grow squeamish, Gods, and sniff at Heaven."

She spake; but Hermod answer'd her and said:—
"Thok, not for gibes we come, we come for tears.
Balder is dead, and Hela holds her prey,
But will restore if all things give him tears.
Begrudge not thine; to all was Balder dear."

But, with a louder laugh, the Hag replied:—
"Is Balder dead? and do ye come for tears?
Thok with dry eyes will weep o'er Balder's pyre.
Weep him all other things, if weep they will—
I weep him not: let Hela keep her prey!"

She spake; and to the cavern's depth she fled,
Mocking: and Hermod knew their toil was vain.
And as seafaring men, who long have wrought
In the great deep for gain, at last come home,
And towards evening see the headlands rise
Of their own country, and can clear descry
A fire of wither'd furze which boys have lit
Upon the cliffs, or smoke of burning weeds
Out of a till'd field inland:—then the wind
Catches them, and drives out again to sea:
And they go long days tossing up and down
Over the grey sea ridges; and the glimpse
Of port they had makes bitterer far their toil—
So the Gods' cross was bitterer for their joy.

Then, sad at heart, to Niord Hermod spake:—
"It is the Accuser Lok, who flouts us all.
Ride back, and tell in Heaven this heavy news.
I must again below, to Hela's realm."
He spoke; and Niord set forth back to Heaven.
But northward Hermod rode, the way below;
The way he knew: and travers'd Giall's stream,
And down to Ocean grop'd, and cross'd the ice,

And came beneath the wall, and found the grate
Still lifted; well was his return foreknown.
And once more Hermod saw around him spread
The joyless plains, and heard the streams of Hell.
But as he enter'd, on the extremest bound
Of Niflheim, he saw one Ghost come near,
Hovering, and stopping oft, as if afraid;
Hoder, the unhappy, whom his own hand slew:
And Hermod look'd, and knew his brother's ghost,
And call'd him by his name, and sternly said:—

"Hoder, ill-fated, blind in heart and eyes!
Why tarriest thou to plunge thee in the gulph
Of the deep inner gloom, but flittest here,
In twilight, on the lonely verge of Hell,
Far from the other ghosts, and Hela's throne?
Doubtless thou fearest to meet Balder's voice,
Thy brother, whom through folly thou didst slay."

He spoke; but Hoder answer'd him and said:—
"Hermod the nimble, dost thou still pursue
The unhappy with reproach, even in the grave?
For this I died, and fled beneath the gloom,
Not daily to endure abhorring Gods,
Nor with a hateful presence cumber Heaven—
And canst thou not, even here, pass pitying by?
No less than Balder have I lost the light
Of Heaven, and communion with my kin:
I too had once a wife, and once a child,
And substance, and a golden house in Heaven:
But all I left of my own act, and fled
Below, and dost thou hate me even here?
Balder upbraids me not, nor hates at all,
Though he has cause, have any cause; but he,
When that with downcast looks I hither came,
Stretch'd forth his hand, and, with benignant voice,
Welcome, he said, *if there be welcome here,*
Brother and fellow-sport of Lok with me!
And not to offend thee, Hermod, nor to force

My hated converse on thee, came I up
From the deep gloom, where I will now return;
But earnestly I long'd to hover near,
Not too far off, when that thou camest by,
To feel the presence of a brother God,
And hear the passage of a horse of Heaven,
For the last time: for here thou com'st no more."

He spake, and turned to go to the inner gloom.
But Hermod stayed him with mild words, and said:

"Thou doest well to chide me, Hoder blind.
Truly thou say'st, the planning guilty mind
Was Lok's; the unwitting hand alone was thine.
But Gods are like the sons of men in this—
When they have woe, they blame the nearest cause.
Howbeit stay, and be appeas'd; and tell—
Sits Balder still in pomp by Hela's side,
Or is he mingled with the unnumber'd dead?"

And the blind Hoder answer'd him and spake:—
"His place of state remains by Hela's side,
But empty: for his wife, for Nanna came
Lately below, and join'd him; and the Pair
Frequent the still recesses of the realm
Of Hela, and hold converse undisturb'd.
But they too doubtless, will have breath'd the balm
Which floats before a visitant from Heaven,
And have drawn upward to this verge of Hell."

He spake, and, as he ceas'd, a puff of wind
Roll'd heavily the leaden mist aside
Round where they stood, and they beheld Two Forms
Make towards them o'er the stretching cloudy plain.
And Hermod straight perceiv'd them, who they were,
Balder and Nanna; and to Balder said:—
"Balder, too truly thou foresaw'st a snare.
Lok triumphs still, and Hela keeps her prey.
No more to Asgard shalt thou come, nor lodge

In thy own house, Breidablik, nor enjoy
The love all bear towards thee, nor train up
Forset, thy son, to be belov'd like thee.
Here must thou lie, and wait an endless age.
Therefore for the last time, O Balder, hail!"

He spake; and Balder answer'd him and said:—
"Hail and farewell, for here thou com'st no more.
Yet mourn not for me, Hermod, when thou sitt'st
In Heaven, nor let the other Gods lament,
As wholly to be pitied, quite forlorn:
For Nanna hath rejoin'd me, who, of old,
In Heaven, was seldom parted from my side;
And still the acceptance follows me, which crown'd
My former life, and cheers me even here.
The iron frown of Hela is relax'd
When I draw nigh, and the wan tribes of dead
Trust me, and gladly bring for my award
Their ineffectual feuds and feeble hates,
Shadows of hates, but they distress them still."

And the fleet-footed Hermod made reply:—
"Thou hast then all the solace death allows,
Esteem and function: and so far is well.
Yet here thou liest, Balder, underground,
Rusting for ever: and the years roll on,
The generations pass, the ages grow,
And bring us nearer to the final day
When from the south shall march the Fiery Band
And cross the Bridge of Heaven, with Lok for guide,
And Fenris at his heel with broken chain:
While from the east the Giant Rymer steers
His ship, and the great Serpent makes to land;
And all are marshall'd in one flaming square
Against the Gods, upon the plains of Heaven.
I mourn thee, that thou canst not help us then."

He spake; but Balder answer'd him and said:—
"Mourn not for me: Mourn, Hermod, for the Gods!

Mourn for the men on Earth, the Gods in Heaven,
Who live, and with their eyes shall see that day.
The day will come, when Asgard's towers shall fall
And Odin, and his Sons, the seed of Heaven:
But what were I, to save them in that hour?
If strength could save them, could not Odin save,
My Father, and his pride, the Warrior Thor,
Vidar the Silent, the Impetuous Tyr?
I, what were I, when these can nought avail?
Yet, doubtless, when the day of battle comes,
And the two Hosts are marshall'd, and in Heaven
The golden-crested Cock shall sound alarm,
And his black Brother-Bird from hence reply,
And bucklers clash, and spears begin to pour—
Longing will stir within my breast, though vain.
But not to me so grievous, as, I know,
To other Gods it were, is my enforc'd
Absence from fields where I could nothing aid:
For I am long since weary of your storm
Of carnage, and find, Hermod, in your life
Something too much of war and broils, which make
Life one perpetual fight, a bath of blood.
Mine eyes are dizzy with the arrowy hail;
Mine ears are stunn'd with blows, and sick for calm.
Inactive therefore let me lie, in gloom,
Unarm'd, inglorious: I attend the course
Of ages, and my late return to light,
In times less alien to a spirit mild,
In new-recover'd seats, the happier day."

He spake; and the fleet Hermod thus replied:—
"Brother, what seats are these, what happier day?
Tell me, that I may ponder it when gone."

And the ray-crownéd Balder answer'd him:—
"Far to the south, beyond The Blue, there spreads
Another Heaven, The Boundless: no one yet
Hath reach'd it: there hereafter shall arise
The second Asgard, with another name.

Thither, when o'er this present Earth and Heaven
The tempest of the latter days hath swept,
And they from sight have disappear'd, and sunk,
Shall a small remnant of the Gods repair:
Hoder and I shall join them from the grave.
There reassembling we shall see emerge
From the bright Ocean at our feet an Earth
More fresh, more verdant than the last, with fruits
Self-springing, and a seed of man preserv'd,
Who then shall live in peace, as now in war.
But we in Heaven shall find again with joy
The ruin'd palaces of Odin, seats
Familiar, halls where we have supp'd of old;
Re-enter them with wonder, never fill
Our eyes with gazing, and rebuild with tears.
And we shall tread once more the well-known plain
Of Ida, and among the grass shall find
The golden dice with which we play'd of yore;
And that will bring to mind the former life
And pastime of the Gods, the wise discourse
Of Odin, the delights of other days.
O Hermod, pray that thou mayst join us then!
Such for the future is my hope: meanwhile,
I rest the thrall of Hela, and endure
Death, and the gloom which round me even now
Thickens, and to its inner gulph recalls.
Farewell, for longer speech is not allow'd."

He spoke, and wav'd farewell, and gave his hand
To Nanna; and she gave their brother blind
Her hand, in turn, for guidance; and The Three
Departed o'er the gloomy plain, and soon
Faded from sight into the interior gloom.
But Hermod stood beside his drooping horse,
Mute, gazing after them in tears: and fain,
Fain had he follow'd their receding steps,
Though they to death were bound, and he to Heaven,
Then; but a Power he could not break withheld.
And as a stork which idle boys have trapp'd,

And tied him in a yard, at autumn sees
Flocks of his kind pass flying o'er his head
To warmer lands, and coasts that keep the sun;
He strains to join their flight, and, from his shed,
Follows them with a long complaining cry—
So Hermod gaz'd, and yearn'd to join his kin.

At last he sigh'd, and set forth back to Heaven.

THE CHURCH OF BROU.

I.

The Castle.

Down the Savoy valleys sounding,
Echoing round this castle old,
'Mid the distant mountain chalets
Hark! what bell for church is toll'd?

In the bright October morning
Savoy's Duke had left his bride,
From the Castle, past the drawbridge,
Flow'd the hunters' merry tide.

Steeds are neighing, gallants glittering.
Gay, her smiling lord to greet,
From her mullion'd chamber-casement
Smiles the Duchess Marguerite.

From Vienna by the Danube
Here she came, a bride, in spring.
Now the autumn crisps the forest;
Hunters gather, bugles ring.

Hounds are pulling, prickers swearing,
Horses fret, and boar-spears glance:
Off!—They sweep the marshy forests,
Westward, on the side of France.

Hark! the game's on foot; they scatter:—
  Down the forest ridings lone,
Furious, single horsemen gallop,
  Hark! a shout—a crash—a groan!

Pale and breathless, came the hunters.
  On the turf dead lies the boar.
God! the Duke lies stretched beside him—
  Senseless, weltering in his gore.

In the dull October evening,
  Down the leaf-strewn forest road
To the Castle, past the drawbridge,
  Came the hunters with their load.

In the hall, with sconces blazing,
  Ladies waiting round her seat,
Cloth'd in smiles, beneath the daïs
  Sate the Duchess Marguerite.

Hark! below the gates unbarring!
  Tramp of men and quick commands!
"—'Tis my lord come back from hunting."—
  And the Duchess claps her hands.

Slow and tired, came the hunters;
  Stopp'd in darkness in the court.
"—Ho, this way, ye laggard hunters!
  To the hall! What sport, what sport?"—

Slow they enter'd with their Master;
  In the hall they laid him down.
On his coat were leaves and blood-stains;
  On his brow an angry frown.

Dead her princely youthful husband
  Lay before his youthful wife:
Bloody 'neath the flaring sconces:
  And the sight froze all her life.

In Vienna by the Danube
Kings hold revel, gallants meet.
Gay of old amid the gayest
Was the Duchess Marguerite.

In Vienna by the Danube
Feast and dance her youth beguil'd.
Till that hour she never sorrow'd;
But from then she never smil'd.

'Mid the Savoy mountain valleys
Far from town or haunt of man,
Stands a lonely Church, unfinish'd,
Which the Duchess Maud began.

Old, that Duchess stern began it;
In grey age, with palsied hands.
But she died as it was building,
And the Church unfinish'd stands;

Stands as erst the builders left it,
When she sunk into her grave.
Mountain greensward paves the chanc[el];
Harebells flower in the nave.

"In my Castle all is sorrow,"— [wen.
Said the Duchess Marguerite thtains!
"Guide me, vassals, to the mogain."—
We will build the Church a[noward,
Sandall'd palmers, faring horia came.
Austrian knights from S[y, O warders,
"Austrian wanderers brintn dame."—
Homage to your Austr[rs answer'd:
From the gate the wardshe you knew.
"Gone, O knights, ine his Duchess.
Dead our Duke, and [ch of Brou."—
Seek her at the Cl[march-worn palmers
Austrian knights an[mountain way.
Climb the windi[here the Fabric
Reach the valley[by day.
Rises higher d[

Stones are sawing, hammers ringing;
On the work the bright sun shines:
In the Savoy mountain meadows,
By the stream, below the pines.

On her palfrey white the Duchess
Sate and watch'd her working train;
Flemish carvers, Lombard gilders,
German masons, smiths from Spain.

Clad in black, on her white palfrey;
Her old architect beside—
There they found her in the mountains,
Morn and noon and eventide.

There she sate, and watched the builders,
Till the Church was roof'd and done.
Last of all, the builders rear'd her
In the nave a tomb of stone.

On the tomb two Forms they sculptur'd,
Lifelike in the marble pale.
One, the Duke in helm and armour;
One, the Duchess in her veil.

Round the tomb the carv'd stone fret-work
Was at Easter-tide put on.
Then the Duchess clos'd her labours;
And she died at the Saint John.

II.

The Church.

Upon the glistening leaden roof
Of the new Pile, the sunlight shines.
The stream goes leaping by.
The hills are cloth'd with pines sun-proof.
'Mid bright green fields, below the pines,
Stands the Church on high.
What Church is this, from men aloof?
'Tis the Church of Brou.

At sunrise, from their dewy lair
Crossing the stream, the kine are seen
Round the wall to stray;
The churchyard wall that clips the square
Of shaven hill-sward trim and green
Where last year they lay.
But all things now are order'd fair
Round the Church of Brou.

On Sundays, at the matin chime,
The Alpine peasants, two and three,
Climb up here to pray.
Burghers and dames, at summer's prime,
Ride out to church from Chambery,
Dight with mantles gay.
But else it is a lonely time
Round the Church of Brou.

On Sundays too a priest doth come
From the wall'd town beyond the pass,
Down the mountain way.
And then you hear the organ's hum,
You hear the white-rob'd priest say mass,
And the people pray.
But else the woods and fields are dumb
Round the Church of Brou.

And after church, when mass is done,
The people to the nave repair
Round the Tomb to stray.
And marvel at the Forms of stone,
And praise the chisell'd broideries rare.
Then they drop away.
The Princely Pair are left alone
In the Church of Brou.

III.

The Tomb.

So rest, for ever rest, O Princely Pair!
In your high Church, 'mid the still mountain air,
Where horn, and hound, and vassals, never come.
Only the blessed Saints are smiling dumb
From the rich painted windows of the nave
On aisle, and transept, and your marble grave:
Where thou, young Prince, shalt never more arise
From the fring'd mattress where thy Duchess lies,
On autumn mornings, when the bugle sounds,
And ride across the drawbridge with thy hounds
To hunt the boar in the crisp woods till eve.
And thou, O Princess, shalt no more receive,
Thou and thy ladies, in the hall of state,
The jaded hunters with their bloody freight,
Coming benighted to the castle gate.
  So sleep, for ever sleep, O Marble Pair!
Or, if ye wake, let it be then, when fair
On the carv'd Western Front a flood of light
Streams from the setting sun, and colours bright
Prophets, transfigur'd Saints, and Martyrs brave,
In the vast western window of the nave;
And on the pavement round the Tomb there glints
A chequer-work of glowing sapphire tints,
And amethyst, and ruby;—then unclose
Your eyelids on the stone where ye repose,
And from your broider'd pillows lift your heads,
And rise upon your cold white marble beds,
And looking down on the warm rosy tints
That chequer, at your feet, the illumin'd flints,
Say—"*What is this? we are in bliss-forgiven—*
Behold the pavement of the courts of Heaven!"—
Or let it be on autumn nights, when rain
Doth rustlingly above your heads complain
On the smooth leaden roof, and on the walls
Shedding her pensive light at intervals

The Moon through the clere-story windows shines,
And the wind wails among the mountain pines.
Then, gazing up through the dim pillars high,
The foliag'd marble forest where ye lie,
"*Hush*"—ye will say—"*it is eternity!*
This is the glimmering verge of Heaven, and these
The columns of the Heavenly Palaces."—
And in the sweeping of the wind your ear
The passage of the Angels' wings will hear,
And on the lichen-crusted leads above
The rustle of the eternal rain of Love.

THE SCHOLAR-GIPSY.

Go, for they call you, shepherd, from the hill;
Go, shepherd, and untie the wattled cotes!
No longer leave thy wistful flock unfed,
Nor let thy bawling fellows rack their throats,
Nor the cropp'd grasses shoot another head.
But when the fields are still,
And the tired men and dogs all gone to rest,
And only the white sheep are sometimes seen
Cross and recross the strips of moon-blanch'd green,
Come, shepherd, and again renew the quest!

Here, where the reaper was at work of late—
In this high field's dark corner, where he leaves
His coat, his basket, and his earthen cruse,
And in the sun all morning binds the sheaves,
Then here, at noon, comes back his stores to use—
Here will I sit and wait,
While to my ear from uplands far away
The bleating of the folded flocks is borne,
With distant cries of reapers in the corn—
All the live murmur of a summer's day.

Screen'd is this nook o'er the high, half-reap'd field,
And here till sun-down, shepherd! will I be.
Through the thick corn the scarlet poppies peep,
And round green roots and yellowing stalks I see
Pale pink convolvulus in tendrils creep;
And air-swept lindens yield
Their scent, and rustle down their perfumed showers
Of bloom on the bent grass where I am laid,
And bower me from the August sun with shade;
And the eye travels down to Oxford's towers.

And near me on the grass lies Glanvil's book—
Come, let me read the oft-read tale again!
The story of that Oxford scholar poor,
Of pregnant parts and quick inventive brain,
Who, tired of knocking at preferment's door,
One summer-morn forsook
His friends, and went to learn the gipsy-lore,
And roam'd the world with that wild brotherhood,
And came, as most men deem'd, to little good,
But came to Oxford and his friends no more.

But once, years after, in the country-lanes,
Two scholars, whom at college erst he knew,
Met him, and of his way of life enquired;
Whereat he answer'd, that the gipsy-crew,
His mates, had arts to rule as they desired
The workings of men's brains,
And they can bind them to what thoughts they will.
"And I," he said, "the secret of their art,
When fully learn'd, will to the world impart;
But it needs heaven-sent moments for this skill."

This said, he left them, and return'd no more.—
But rumours hung about the country-side,
That the lost Scholar long was seen to stray,
Seen by rare glimpses, pensive and tongue-tied,
In hat of antique shape, and cloak of grey,
The same the gipsies wore.

Shepherds had met him on the Hurst in spring;
At some lone alehouse in the Berkshire moors,
On the warm ingle-bench, the smock-frock'd boors
Had found him seated at their entering,

But, 'mid their drink and clatter, he would fly.
And I myself seem half to know thy looks,
And put the shepherds, wanderer! on thy trace;
And boys who in lone wheatfields scare the rooks
I ask if thou hast pass'd their quiet place;
Or in my boat I lie
Moor'd to the cool bank in the summer-heats,
'Mid wide grass meadows which the sunshine fills,
And watch the warm, green-muffled Cumner hills,
And wonder if thou haunt'st their shy retreats.

For most, I know, thou lov'st retired ground!
Thee at the ferry Oxford riders blithe,
Returning home on summer-nights, have met
Crossing the stripling Thames at Bab-lock-hithe,
Trailing in the cool stream thy fingers wet,
As the slow punt swings round;
And leaning backward in a pensive dream,
And fostering in thy lap a heap of flowers
Pluck'd in shy fields and distant Wychwood bowers,
And thine eyes resting on the moonlit stream.

And then they land, and thou art seen no more!—
Maidens, who from the distant hamlets come
To dance around the Fyfield elm in May,
Oft through the darkening fields have seen thee roam,
Or cross a stile into the public way.
Oft thou hast given them store
Of flowers—the frail-leaf'd, white anemone,
Dark bluebells drench'd with dews of summer eves,
And purple orchises with spotted leaves—
But none has words she can report of thee.

And, above Godstow Bridge, when hay-time's here
In June, and many a scythe in sunshine flames,
Men who through those wide fields of breezy grass
Where black-wing'd swallows haunt the glittering Thames,
To bathe in the abandon'd lasher pass,
Have often pass'd thee near
Sitting upon the river bank o'ergrown;
Mark'd thine outlandish garb, thy figure spare,
Thy dark vague eyes, and soft abstracted air—
But, when they came from bathing, thou wert gone!

At some lone homestead in the Cumner hills,
Where at her open door the housewife darns,
Thou hast been seen, or hanging on a gate
To watch the threshers in the mossy barns.
Children who early range these slopes and late
For cresses from the rills,
Have known thee watching, all an April-day,
The springing pastures and the feeding kine;
And mark'd thee, when the stars come out and shine,
Through the long dewy grass move slow away.

In autumn, on the skirts of Bagley Wood—
Where most the gipsies by the turf-edged way
Pitch their smoked tents, and every bush you see
With scarlet patches tagg'd and shreds of grey,
Above the forest-ground called Thessaly—
The blackbird, picking food,
Sees thee, nor stops his meal, nor fears at all;
So often has he known thee past him stray,
Rapt, twirling in thy hand a wither'd spray,
And waiting for the spark from heaven to fall.

And once, in winter, on the causeway chill
Where home through flooded fields foot-travellers go,
Have I not pass'd thee on the wooden bridge,
Wrapt in thy cloak and battling with the snow,
Thy face tow'rd Hinksey and its wintry ridge?
And thou hast climb'd the hill,

And gain'd the white brow of the Cumner range;
Turn'd once to watch, while thick the snowflakes fall,
The line of festal light in Christ-Church hall—
Then sought thy straw in some sequester'd grange.

But what--I dream! Two hundred years are flown
Since first thy story ran through Oxford halls,
And the grave Glanvil did the tale inscribe
That thou wert wander'd from the studious walls
To learn strange arts, and join a gipsy-tribe;
And thou from earth art gone
Long since, and in some quiet churchyard laid—
Some country-nook, where o'er thy unknown grave
Tall grasses and white flowering nettles wave,
Under a dark, red-fruited yew-tree's shade.

—No, no, thou hast not felt the lapse of hours!
For what wears out the life of mortal men?
'Tis that from change to change their being rolls;
'Tis that repeated shocks, again, again,
Exhaust the energy of strongest souls
And numb the elastic powers.
Till having used our nerves with bliss and teen,
And tired upon a thousand schemes our wit,
To the just-pausing Genius we remit
Our worn-out life, and are—what we have been.

Thou hast not lived, why should'st thou perish, so?
Thou hadst *one* aim, *one* business, *one* desire;
Else wert thou long since numbered with the dead!
Else hadst thou spent, like other men, thy fire!
The generations of thy peers are fled,
And we ourselves shall go;
But thou possessest an immortal lot,
And we imagine thee exempt from age
And living as thou liv'st on Glanvil's page,
Because thou hadst—what we, alas! have not.

For early didst thou leave the world, with powers
Fresh, undiverted to the world without,
Firm to their mark, not spent on other things;
Free from the sick fatigue, the languid doubt,
Which much to have tried, in much been baffled, brings
O life unlike to ours!
Who fluctuate idly without term or scope,
Of whom each strives, nor knows for what he strives,
And each half lives a hundred different lives;
Who wait like thee, but not, like thee, in hope.

Thou waitest for the spark from heaven! and we,
Light half-believers of our casual creeds,
Who never deeply felt, nor clearly will'd,
Whose insight never has borne fruit in deeds,
Whose vague resolves never have been fulfill'd;
For whom each year we see
Breeds new beginnings, disappointments new;
Who hesitate and falter life away,
And lose to-morrow the ground won to-day—
Ah! do not we, wanderer! await it too?

Yes, we await it!—but it still delays,
And then we suffer! and amongst us one,
Who most has suffer'd, takes dejectedly
His seat upon the intellectual throne;
And all his store of sad experience he
Lays bare of wretched days;
Tells us his misery's birth and growth and signs,
And how the dying spark of hope was fed,
And how the breast was soothed, and how the head,
And all his hourly varied anodynes.

This for our wisest! and we others pine,
And wish the long unhappy dream would end,
And waive all claim to bliss, and try to bear;
With close-lipp'd patience for our only friend,
Sad patience, too near neighbour to despair—
But none has hope like thine!

Thou through the fields and through the woods dost stray,
Roaming the country-side, a truant boy,
Nursing thy project in unclouded joy,
And every doubt long blown by time away.

O born in days when wits were fresh and clear,
And life ran gaily as the sparkling Thames;
Before this strange disease of modern life,
With its sick hurry, its divided aims,
Its heads o'ertax'd, its palsied hearts, was rife—
Fly hence, our contact fear!
Still fly, plunge deeper in the bowering wood!
Averse, as Dido did with gesture stern
From her false friend's approach in Hades turn,
Wave us away, and keep thy solitude!

Still nursing the unconquerable hope,
Still clutching the inviolable shade,
With a free, onward impulse brushing through,
By night, the silver'd branches of the glade—
Far on the forest-skirts, where none pursue,
On some mild pastoral slope
Emerge, and resting on the moonlit pales
Freshen thy flowers as in former years
With dew, or listen with enchanted ears,
From the dark dingles, to the nightingales!

But fly our paths, our feverish contact fly!
For strong the infection of our mental strife,
Which, though it gives no bliss, yet spoils for rest;
And we should win thee from thy own fair life,
Like us distracted, and like us unblest.
Soon, soon thy cheer would die,
Thy hopes grow timorous, and unfix'd thy powers,
And thy clear aims be cross and shifting made;
And then thy glad perennial youth would fade,
Fade, and grow old at last, and die like ours.

Then fly our greetings, fly our speech and smiles!
—As some grave Tyrian trader, from the sea,
Descried at sunrise an emerging prow
Lifting the cool-hair'd creepers stealthily,
The fringes of a southward-facing brow
Among the Ægæan isles;
And saw the merry Grecian coaster come,
Freighted with amber grapes, and Chian wine,
Green, bursting figs, and tunnies steep'd in brine—
And knew the intruders on his ancient home,

The young light-hearted masters of the waves—
And snatch'd his rudder, and shook out more sail;
And day and night held on indignantly
O'er the blue Midland waters with the gale,
Betwixt the Syrtes and soft Sicily,
To where the Atlantic raves
Outside the western straits; and unbent sails
There, where down cloudy cliffs, through sheets of foam,
Shy traffickers, the dark Iberians come;
And on the beach undid his corded bales.

THE FORSAKEN MERMAN.

Come, dear children, let us away;
Down and away below!
Now my brothers call from the bay,
Now the great winds shoreward blow,
Now the salt tides seaward flow;
Now the wild white horses play,
Champ and chafe and toss in the spray.
Children dear, let us away!
This way, this way!

Call her once before you go—
Call once yet!
In a voice that she will know:
"Margaret! Margaret!"
Children's voices should be dear
(Call once more) to a mother's ear;
Children's voices, wild with pain—
Surely she will come again!
Call her once and come away;
This way, this way!
"Mother dear, we cannot stay!
The wild white horses foam and fret."
Margaret! Margaret!

Come, dear children, come away down;
Call no more!
One last look at the white-walled town,
And the little grey church on the windy shore,
Then come down!
She will not come though you call all day;
Come away, come away!

Children dear, was it yesterday
We heard the sweet bells over the bay?
In the caverns where we lay,
Through the surf and through the swell,
The far-off sound of a silver bell?
Sand-strewn caverns, cool and deep,
Where the winds are all asleep;
Where the spent lights quiver and gleam,
Where the salt weed sways in the stream,
Where the sea-beasts, ranged all round,
Feed in the ooze of their pasture-ground;
Where the sea-snakes coil and twine,
Dry their mail and bask in the brine;
Where great whales come sailing by,
Sail and sail, with unshut eye,
Round the world for ever and aye?
When did music come this way?
Children dear, was it yesterday?

Children dear, was it yesterday
(Call yet once) that she went away?
Once she sate with you and me,
On a red gold throne in the heart of the sea,
And the youngest sate on her knee.
She comb'd its bright hair, and she tended it well,
When down swung the sound of a far-off bell.
She sigh'd, she look'd up through the clear green sea;
She said: "I must go, for my kinsfolk pray
In the little grey church on the shore to-day.
'Twill be Easter-time in the world—ah me!
And I lose my poor soul, Merman! here with thee."
I said: "Go up, dear heart, through the waves;
Say thy prayer, and come back to the kind sea-caves!"
She smiled, she went up through the surf in the bay.
Children dear, was it yesterday?

Children dear, were we long alone?
"The sea grows stormy, the little ones moan;
Long prayers," I said, "in the world they say;
Come!" I said; and we rose through the surf in the bay.
We went up the beach, by the sandy down
Where the sea-stocks bloom, to the white-wall'd town;
Through the narrow paved streets, where all was still,
To the little grey church on the windy hill.
From the church came a murmur of folk at their prayers,
But we stood without in the cold blowing airs.
We climb'd on the graves, on the stones worn with rains,
And we gazed up the aisle through the small leaded panes.
She sate by the pillar; we saw her clear:
"Margaret, hist! come quick, we are here!
Dear heart," I said, "we are long alone;
The sea grows stormy, the little ones moan."
But, ah, she gave me never a look,
For her eyes were seal'd to the holy book!
Loud prays the priest; shut stands the door.
Come away, children, call no more!
Come away, come down, call no more!

Down, down, down!
Down to the depths of the sea!
She sits at her wheel in the humming town,
Singing most joyfully.
Hark what she sings: "O joy, O joy,
For the humming street, and the child with its toy!
For the priest, and the bell, and the holy well;
For the wheel where I spun,
And the blessed light of the sun!"
And so she sings her fill,
Singing most joyfully,
Till the spindle drops from her hand,
And the whizzing wheel stands still.
She steals to the window, and looks at the sand,
And over the sand at the sea;
And her eyes are set in a stare;
And anon there breaks a sigh,
And anon there drops a tear,
From a sorrow-clouded eye,
And a heart sorrow-laden,
A long, long sigh;
For the cold strange eyes of a little Mermaiden
And the gleam of her golden hair.

Come away, away, children;
Come, children, come down!
The hoarse wind blows coldly;
Lights shine in the town.
She will start from her slumber
When gusts shake the door;
She will hear the winds howling,
Will hear the waves roar.
We shall see, while above us
The waves roar and whirl,
A ceiling of amber,
A pavement of pearl.
Singing: "Here came a mortal,
But faithless was she!
And alone dwell for ever
The kings of the sea."

But, children, at midnight,
When soft the winds blow,
When clear falls the moonlight,
When spring-tides are low;
When sweet airs come seaward
From heaths starr'd with broom,
And high rocks throw mildly
On the blanch'd sands a gloom;
Up the still, glistening beaches,
Up the creeks we will hie,
Over banks of bright seaweed
The ebb-tide leaves dry.
We will gaze, from the sand-hills,
At the white, sleeping town;
At the church on the hill-side—
And then come back down.
Singing; "There dwells a loved one,
But cruel is she!
She left lonely for ever
The kings of the sea."

THE NECKAN.

In summer, on the headlands,
The Baltic Sea along,
Sits Neckan with his harp of gold,
And sings his plaintive song.

Green rolls beneath the headlands,
Green rolls the Baltic Sea.
And there, below the Neckan's feet,
His wife and children be.

He sings not of the ocean,
Its shells and roses pale.
Of earth, of earth the Neckan sings;
He hath no other tale.

He sits upon the headlands,
And sings a mournful stave
Of all he saw and felt on earth,
Far from the green sea wave.

Sings how, a knight, he wander'd
By castle, field, and town.—
But earthly knights have harder hearts
Than the Sea Children own.

Sings of his earthly bridal—
Priest, knights, and ladies gay.
"And who art thou," the priest began,
"Sir Knight, who wedd'st to-day?"—

"I am no knight," he answer'd;
"From the sea waves I come."—
The knights drew sword, the ladies scream'd,
The surplic'd priest stood dumb.

He sings how from the chapel
He vanish'd with his bride,
And bore her down to the sea halls,
Beneath the salt sea tide.

He sings how she sits weeping
'Mid shells that round her lie.
"False Neckan shares my bed," she weeps;
"No Christian mate have I."—

He sings how through the billows
He rose to earth again
And sought a priest to sign the cross,
That Neckan Heaven might gain.

He sings how, on an evening,
Beneath the birch trees cool,
He sate and played his harp of gold,
Beside the river pool.

Beside the pool sate Neckan—
Tears fill'd his cold blue eye.
On his white mule, across the bridge,
A cassock'd priest rode by.

"Why sitt'st thou there, O Neckan,
And play'st thy harp of gold?
Sooner shall this my staff bear leaves,
Than thou shalt Heaven behold."—

The cassock'd priest rode onwards,
And vanish'd with his mule.
And Neckan in the twilight grey
Wept by the river pool.

In summer, on the headlands,
The Baltic Sea along,
Sits Neckan with his harp of gold,
And sings this plaintive song.

THE STRAYED REVELLER.

THE PORTICO OF CIRCE'S PALACE. EVENING.

A Youth. Circe.

The Youth.

Faster, faster,
O Circe, Goddess,
Let the wild, thronging train,
The bright procession
Of eddying forms,
Sweep through my soul!

Thou standest, smiling
Down on me; thy right arm
Lean'd up against the column there,
Props thy soft cheek;
Thy left holds, hanging loosely,
The deep cup, ivy-cinctur'd,
I held but now.

Is it then evening
So soon? I see, the night dews,
Cluster'd in thick beads, dim
The agate brooch-stones
On thy white shoulder.
The cool night-wind, too,
Blows through the portico,
Stirs thy hair, Goddess,
Waves thy white robe.

Circe.

Whence art thou, sleeper?

The Youth.

When the white dawn first
Through the rough fir-planks
Of my hut, by the chestnuts,
Up at the valley-head,
Came breaking, Goddess,
I sprang up, I threw round me
My dappled fawn-skin:
Passing out, from the wet turf,
Where they lay, by the hut door,
I snatch'd up my vine-crown, my fir-staff,
All drench'd in dew:
Came swift down to join
The rout early gather'd
In the town, round the temple,
Iacchus' white fane
On yonder hill.

Quick I pass'd, following
The wood-cutters' cart-track
Down the dark valley;—I saw
On my left, through the beeches,
Thy palace, Goddess,
Smokeless, empty:
Trembling, I enter'd; beheld
The court all silent,
The lions sleeping;

On the altar, this bowl.
I drank, Goddess—
And sunk down here, sleeping,
On the steps of thy portico.

Circe.

Foolish boy! why tremblest thou?
Thou lovest it, then, my wine?
Wouldst more of it? See, how glows,
Through the delicate flush'd marble,
The red creaming liquor,
Strown with dark seeds!
Drink, then! I chide thee not,
Deny thee not my bowl.
Come, stretch forth thy hand, then—so,—
Drink, drink again!

The Youth.

Thanks, gracious One!
Ah, the sweet fumes again!
More soft, ah me!
More subtle-winding
Than Pan's flute-music.
Faint—faint! Ah me!
Again the sweet sleep.

Circe.

Hist! Thou—within there!
Come forth, Ulysses;
Art tired with hunting?
While we range the woodland,
See what the day brings.

Ulysses.

Ever new magic!
Hast thou then lur'd thither,
Wonderful Goddess, by thy art,
The young, languid-ey'd Ampelus,
Iacchus' darling—
Or some youth belov'd of Pan,
Of Pan and the Nymphs?

That he sits, bending downward
His white, delicate neck
To the ivy-wreath'd marge
Of thy cup:—the bright, glancing vine-leaves
That crown his hair,
Falling forwards, mingling
With the dark ivy-plants;
His fawn-skin, half untied,
Smear'd with red wine-stains? who is he,
That he sits, overweigh'd
By fumes of wine and sleep,
So late, in thy portico?
What youth, Goddess,—what guest
Of Gods or mortals?

Circe.

Hist! he wakes!
I lur'd him not hither, Ulysses.
Nay, ask him!

The Youth.

Who speaks? Ah! who comes forth
To thy side, Goddess, from within?
How shall I name him?
This spare, dark-featur'd,
Quick-ey'd stranger?
Ah! and I see too
His sailor's bonnet,
His short coat, travel-tarnish'd,
With one arm bare,—
Art thou not he, whom fame
This long time rumours
The favour'd guest of Circe, brought by the waves?
Art thou he, stranger?
The wise Ulysses,
Laertes' son?

Ulysses.

I am Ulysses.
And thou, too, sleeper?

Thy voice is sweet.
It may be thou hast follow'd
Through the islands some divine bard,
By age taught many things,
Age and the Muses;
And heard him delighting
The chiefs and people
In the banquet, and learn'd his songs,
Of Gods and Heroes,
Of war and arts,
And peopled cities
Inland, or built
By the grey sea.—If so, then hail!
I honour and welcome thee.

The Youth.

The Gods are happy.
They turn on all sides
Their shining eyes:
And see, below them,
The Earth, and men.

They see Tiresias
Sitting, staff in hand,
On the warm, grassy
Asopus' bank:
His robe drawn over
His old, sightless head:
Revolving inly
The doom of Thebes.

They see the Centaurs
In the upper glens
Of Pelion, in the streams,
Where red-berried ashes fringe
The clear-brown shallow pools;
With streaming flanks, and heads
Rear'd proudly, snuffing
The mountain wind.

They see the Indian
Drifting, knife in hand,
His frail boat moor'd to
A floating isle thick matted
With large-leav'd, low-creeping melon-plants,
And the dark cucumber.
He reaps, and stows them,
Drifting—drifting—round him,
Round his green harvest-plot,
Flow the cool lake-waves:
The mountains ring them.

They see the Scythian
On the wide Stepp, unharnessing
His wheel'd house at noon.
He tethers his beast down, and makes his meal,
Mares' milk, and bread
Bak'd on the embers:—all around
The boundless waving grass-plains stretch, thick-starr'd
With saffron and the yellow hollyhock
And flag-leav'd iris flowers.
Sitting in his cart
He makes his meal: before him, for long miles,
Alive with green bright lizards,
And the springing bustard fowl,
The track, a straight black line,
Furrows the rich soil: here and there
Clusters of lonely mounds
Topp'd with rough-hewn,
Grey, rain-blear'd statues, overpeer
The sunny waste.

They see the Ferry
On the broad, clay-laden
Lone Chorasmian stream: thereon
With snort and strain,

Two horses, strongly swimming, tow
The ferry-boat, with woven ropes
To either bow
Firm-harness'd by the mane:—a Chief,
With shout and shaken spear
Stands at the prow, and guides them: but astern
The cowering Merchants, in long robes,
Sit pale beside their wealth
Of silk-bales and of balsam-drops,
Of gold and ivory,
Of turquoise-earth and amethyst,
Jasper and chalcedony,
And milk-barr'd onyx stones.
The loaded boat swings groaning
In the yellow eddies.
The Gods behold them.

They see the Heroes
Sitting in the dark ship
On the foamless, long-heaving,
Violet sea:
At sunset nearing
The Happy Islands.

These things, Ulysses,
The wise Bards also
Behold and sing.
But oh, what labour!
O Prince, what pain!

They too can see
Tiresias:—but the Gods,
Who give them vision,
Added this law:
That they should bear too
His groping blindness,
His dark foreboding,
His scorn'd white hairs,
Bear Hera's anger
Through a life lengthen'd
To seven ages.

They see the Centaurs
On Pelion:—then they feel,
They too, the maddening wine
Swell their large veins to bursting: in wild pain
They feel the biting spears
Of the grim Lapithæ, and Theseus, drive,
Drive crashing through their bones: they feel
High on a jutting rock in the red stream
Alcmena's dreadful son
Ply his bow:—such a price
The Gods exact for song;
To become what we sing.

They see the Indian
On his mountain lake:—but squalls
Make their skiff reel, and worms
In the unkind spring have gnaw'd
Their melon-harvest to the heart: they see
The Scythian:—but long frosts
Parch them in winter-time on the bare Stepp,
Till they too fade like grass: they crawl
Like shadows forth in spring.

They see the Merchants
On the Oxus' stream:—but care
Must visit first them too, and make them pale.
Whether, through whirling sand,
A cloud of desert robber-horse has burst
Upon their caravan: or greedy kings,
In the wall'd cities the way passes through,
Crushed them with tolls: or fever-airs,
On some great river's marge,
Mown them down, far from home.

They see the Heroes
Near harbour:—but they share
Their lives, and former violent toil, in Thebes,
Seven-gated Thebes, or Troy:
Or where the echoing oars
Of Argo, first,
Startled the unknown Sea.

The old Silenus
Came, lolling in the sunshine,
From the dewy forest covers,
This way, at noon.
Sitting by me, while his Fauns
Down at the water side
Sprinkled and smooth'd
His drooping garland,
He told me these things.

But I, Ulysses,
Sitting on the warm steps
Looking over the valley,
All day long, have seen,
Without pain, without labour,
Sometimes a wild-hair'd Mænad;
Sometimes a Faun with torches;
And sometimes, for a moment,
Passing through the dark stems
Flowing-rob'd—the belov'd,
The desir'd, the divine,
Belov'd Iacchus.

Ah cool night-wind, tremulous stars!
Ah glimmering water—
Fitful earth-murmur—
Dreaming woods!
Ah golden-hair'd, strangely smiling Goddess,
And thou, prov'd, much enduring,
Wave-toss'd Wanderer!
Who can stand still?
Ye fade, ye swim, ye waver before me.
The cup again!

Faster, faster,
O Circe, Goddess,
Let the wild thronging train,
The bright procession
Of eddying forms,
Sweep through my soul!

PHILOMELA.

Hark! ah, the nightingale!
The tawny-throated!
Hark! from that moonlit cedar what a burst!
What triumph! hark—what pain!

O wanderer from a Grecian shore,
Still, after many years, in distant lands,
Still nourishing in thy bewilder'd brain
That wild, unquench'd, deep-sunken, old-world pain—
Say, will it never heal?
And can this fragrant lawn
With its cool trees, and night,
And the sweet, tranquil Thames
And moonshine, and the dew,
To thy rack'd heart and brain
Afford no balm?
Dost thou to-night behold
Here, through the moonlight in this English grass,
The unfriendly palace on the Thracian wild?
Dost thou again peruse
With hot cheeks and sear'd eyes
The too clear web, and thy dumb Sister's shame?
Dost thou once more assay
Thy flight, and feel come over thee,
Poor Fugitive, the feathery change
Once more, and once more seem to make resound
With love and hate, triumph and agony,
Lone Daulis, and the high Cephissian vale?
Listen, Eugenia—
How thick the bursts come crowding through the leaves!
Again—thou hearest!
Eternal Passion!
Eternal Pain!

MEMORIAL VERSES.

April, 1850.

GOETHE in Weimar sleeps, and Greece,
Long since, saw Byron's struggle cease.
But one such death remain'd to come.
The last poetic voice is dumb.
What shall be said o'er Wordsworth's tomb?

When Byron's eyes were shut in death,
We bow'd our head and held our breath.
He taught us little: but our soul
Had *felt* him like the thunder's roll.
With shivering heart the strife we saw
Of Passion with Eternal Law;
And yet with reverential awe
We watch'd the fount of fiery life
Which serv'd for that Titanic strife.

When Goethe's death was told, we said—
Sunk, then, is Europe's sagest head.
Physician of the Iron Age,
Goethe has done his pilgrimage.
He took the suffering human race,
He read each wound, each weakness clear—
And struck his finger on the place

And said—*Thou ailest here, and here.*—
He look'd on Europe's dying hour
Of fitful dream and feverish power;
His eye plung'd down the weltering strife,
The turmoil of expiring life;
He said—*The end is everywhere:*
Art still has truth, take refuge there.
And he was happy, if to know
Causes of things, and far below
His feet to see the lurid flow
Of terror, and insane distress,
And headlong fate, be happiness.

And Wordsworth! Ah, pale Ghosts, rejoice!
For never has such soothing voice
Been to your shadowy world convey'd,
Since erst, at morn, some wandering shade
Heard the clear song of Orpheus come
Through Hades, and the mournful gloom.
Wordsworth has gone from us—and ye,
Ah, may ye feel his voice as we.
He too upon a wintry clime
Had fallen—on this iron time
Of doubts, disputes, distractions, fears.
He found us when the age had bound
Our souls in its benumbing round;
He spoke, and loos'd our heart in tears.
He laid us as we lay at birth
On the cool flowery lap of earth;
Smiles broke from us and we had ease.
The hills were round us, and the breeze
Went o'er the sun-lit fields again:
Our foreheads felt the wind and rain.
Our youth return'd: for there was shed
On spirits that had long been dead,
Spirits dried up and closely-furl'd,
The freshness of the early world.

Ah, since dark days still bring to light
Man's prudence and man's fiery might,
Time may restore us in his course
Goethe's sage mind and Byron's force:
But where will Europe's latter hour
Again find Wordsworth's healing power?
Others will teach us how to dare,
And against fear our breast to steel:
Others will strengthen us to bear—
But who, ah who, will make us feel?
The cloud of mortal destiny,
Others will front it fearlessly—
But who, like him, will put it by?

Keep fresh the grass upon his grave,
O Rotha! with thy living wave.
Sing him thy best! for few or none
Hears thy voice right, now he is gone.

QUIET WORK.

One lesson, Nature, let me learn of thee,
One lesson which in every wind is blown,
One lesson of two duties served at one
Though the loud world proclaim their enmity—

Of toil unsever'd from tranquillity!
Of labour, that in still advance outgrows
Far noisier schemes, accomplish'd in repose,
Too great for haste, too high for rivalry!

Yes, while on earth a thousand discords ring,
Man's senseless uproar mingling with his toil,
Still do thy sleepless ministers move on,

Their glorious tasks in silence perfecting;
Still working, blaming still our vain turmoil,
Labourers that shall not fail, when man is gone.

SHAKESPEARE.

Others abide our question. Thou art free.
We ask and ask—Thou smilest and art still,
Out-topping knowledge. For the loftiest hill,
Who to the stars uncrowns his majesty,

Planting his steadfast footsteps in the sea,
Making the heaven of heavens his dwelling-place,
Spares but the cloudy border of his base
To the foil'd searching of mortality;

And thou, who didst the stars and sunbeams know,
Self-school'd, self-scann'd, self-honour'd, self-secure,
Didst tread on earth unguess'd at.—Better so!

All pains the immortal spirit must endure,
All weakness which impairs, all griefs which bow,
Find their sole speech in that victorious brow.

CONSOLATION.

Mist clogs the sunshine.
Smoky dwarf houses
Hem me round everywhere;
A vague dejection
Weighs down my soul.

Yet, while I languish,
Everywhere countless
Prospects unroll themselves,
And countless beings
Pass countless moods.

Far hence, in Asia,
On the smooth convent-roofs,
On the gilt terraces,
Of holy Lassa,
Bright shines the sun.

Grey time-worn marbles
Hold the pure Muses;
In their cool gallery,
By yellow Tiber,
They still look fair.

Strange unloved uproar
Shrills round their portal;
Yet not on Helicon
Kept they more cloudless
Their noble calm.

Through sun-proof alleys
In a lone, sand-hemm'd
City of Africa,
A blind, led beggar,
Age-bow'd, asks alms.

No bolder robber
Erst abode ambush'd
Deep in the sandy waste;
No clearer eyesight
Spied prey afar.

Saharan sand-winds
Sear'd his keen eyeballs;
Spent is the spoil he won.
For him the present
Holds only pain.

Two young, fair lovers,
Where the warm June-wind,
Fresh from the summer fields
Plays fondly round them,
Stand, tranced in joy.

With sweet, join'd voices,
And with eyes brimming:
"Ah," they cry, "Destiny,
Prolong the present!
Time, stand still here!"

The prompt stern Goddess
Shakes her head, frowning;
Time gives his hour-glass
Its due reversal;
Their hour is gone.

With weak indulgence
Did the just Goddess
Lengthen their happiness,
She lengthen'd also
Distress elsewhere.

The hour, whose happy
Unalloy'd moments
I would eternalise,
Ten thousand mourners
Well pleased see end.

The bleak, stern hour,
Whose severe moments
I would annihilate,
Is pass'd by others
In warmth, light, joy.

Time, so complain'd of,
Who to no one man
Shows partiality,
Brings round to all men
Some undimm'd hours.

MORALITY.

We cannot kindle when we will
The fire which in the heart resides;
The spirit bloweth and is still,
In mystery our soul abides.
But tasks in hours of insight will'd
Can be through hours of gloom fulfill'd.

With aching hands and bleeding feet
We dig and heap, lay stone on stone;
We bear the burden and the heat
Of the long day, and wish 'twere done.
Not till the hours of light return,
All we have built do we discern.

Then, when the clouds are off the soul,
When thou dost bask in Nature's eye,
Ask, how *she* view'd thy self-control,
Thy struggling, task'd morality—
Nature, whose free, light, cheerful air,
Oft made thee, in thy gloom, despair.

And she, whose censure thou dost dread,
Whose eye thou wast afraid to seek,
See, on her face a glow is spread,
A strong emotion on her cheek!
" Ah, child!" she cries, " that strife divine,
Whence was it, for it is not mine?

" There is no effort on *my* brow—
I do not strive, I do not weep;
I rush with the swift spheres and glow
In joy, and when I will, I sleep.
Yet that severe, that earnest air,
I saw, I felt it once—but where?

" I knew not yet the gauge of time,
Nor wore the manacles of space;
I felt it in some other clime,
I saw it in some other place.
'Twas when the heavenly house I trod,
And lay upon the breast of God."

SONGS OF CALLICLES.

I.

The track winds down to the clear stream,
To cross the sparkling shallows; there
The cattle love to gather, on their way
To the high mountain-pastures, and to stay,
Till the rough cow-herds drive them past,
Knee-deep in the cool ford; for 'tis the last
Of all the woody, high, well-water'd dells
On Etna; and the beam
Of noon is broken there by chestnut-boughs
Down its steep verdant sides; the air
Is freshen'd by the leaping stream, which throws
Eternal showers of spray on the moss'd roots
Of trees, and veins of turf, and long dark shoots

Of ivy-plants, and fragrant hanging bells
Of hyacinths, and on late anemonies,
That muffle its wet banks ; but glade,
And stream, and sward, and chestnut-trees,
End here ; Etna beyond, in the broad glare
Of the hot noon, without a shade,
Slope behind slope, up to the peak, lies bare ;
The peak, round which the white clouds play.

II.

Through the black, rushing smoke-bursts,
Thick breaks the red flame ;
All Etna heaves fiercely
Her forest-clothed frame.

Not here, O Apollo!
Are haunts meet for thee ;
But, where Helicon breaks down
In cliff to the sea.

Where the moon-silver'd inlets
Send far their light voice
Up the still vale of Thisbe—
O speed, and rejoice!

On the sward at the cliff-top
Lie strewn the white flocks ;
On the cliff side the pigeons
Roost deep in the rocks.

In the moonlight the shepherds,
Soft lull'd by the rills,
Lie wrapt in their blankets
Asleep on the hills.

—What forms are these coming
So white through the gloom ?
What garments out-glistening
The gold-flower'd broom ?

What sweet-breathing presence
Out-perfumes the thyme?
What voices enrapture
The night's balmy prime?—

'Tis Apollo comes leading
His choir, the Nine.
—The leader is fairest,
But all are divine.

They are lost in the hollows!
They stream up again!
What seek on this mountain
The glorified train?—

They bathe on this mountain,
In the spring by their road;
Then on to Olympus,
Their endless abode.

—Whose praise do they mention?
Of what is it told?—
What will be for ever;
What was from of old.

First hymn they the Father
Of all things; and then
The rest of immortals,
The action of men.

The day in his hotness,
The strife with the palm;
The night in her silence,
The stars in their calm.

NOTES.

SOHRAB AND RUSTUM (Page 1).

This poem was included in the volume published in 1853, which contains the following note:

"The story of Sohrab and Rustum is told in Sir John Malcolm's *History of Persia* as follows: The young Sohrab was the fruit of one of Rustum's early alliances. He had left his mother, and sought fame under the banners of Afrasiab, whose armies he commanded, and soon obtained a renown beyond that of all contemporary heroes but his father. He had carried death and dismay into the ranks of the Persians, and had terrified the boldest warriors of that country, before Rustum encountered him, which at last that hero resolved to do, under a feigned name. They met three times. The first time they parted by mutual consent, though Sohrab had the advantage; the second, the youth obtained a victory, but granted life to his unknown father; the third was fatal to Sohrab, who, when writhing in the pangs of death, warned his conqueror to shun the vengeance that is inspired by parental woes, and bade him dread the rage of the mighty Rustum, who must soon learn that he had slain his son Sohrab. These words, we are told, were as death to the aged hero; and when he recovered from a trance, he called in despair for proofs of what Sohrab had said. The afflicted and dying youth tore open his mail, and showed his father a seal which his mother had placed on his arm when she discovered to him the secret of his birth, and bade him seek his father. The sight of his own signet rendered Rustum quite frantic; he cursed himself, attempting to put an end to his existence, and was only prevented by the efforts of his expiring son. After Sohrab's death he burnt his tents and all his goods, and carried the corpse to Seistan, where it was interred. The army of Turan was, agreeably to the last request of Sohrab, permitted to cross the Oxus unmolested. To reconcile us to the improbability of this tale, we are informed that Rustum could have no idea his son was in existence. The mother of Sohrab had written to tell him her child was a daughter, fearing to lose her darling infant if she revealed the truth; and Rustum, as before stated, fought under a feigned name, an usage not uncommon in the chivalrous combats of those days."

The story of Sohrab and Rustum belongs to the semi-mythical period of Persian history. Rustum is the national hero, the faithful warrior of Kai

Khosroo, and his opponent is Afrasiab, the leader of the Turanians or Scythians or Tartars. All the other elements of the story which are necessary for a literary appreciation of Arnold's work can be obtained from the poem itself.

The Jemshid mentioned in l. 859 also belonged to this early period. He was the founder of the great city Persepolis, the inventor of many useful arts, the reformer of manners and customs, and his glorious reign was the theme of the patriotic Persian poets of a later day.

The following passages from Arnold's preface to the volume of 1857 might with advantage be studied in connection with this poem:

'The Poet has in the first place to select an excellent action; and what actions are most excellent? Those, certainly, which most powerfully appeal to the great primary human affections; to those elementary feelings which subsist permanently in the race, and which are independent of time. These feelings are permanent and the same; that which interests them is permanent and the same. The modernness or antiquity of an action, therefore, has nothing to do with its fitness for poetical representation; this depends upon its inherent qualities. To the elementary part of our nature, to our passions, that which is great and passionate is eternally interesting, and interesting solely in proportion to its greatness and to its passion. Poetical works belong to the domain of our permanent passions; let them interest these, and the voice of all subordinate claims upon them is at once silenced.

"The externals of a past action the poet cannot know with the precision of a contemporary; but his business is with its essentials. The outward man of Œdipus or of Macbeth, the houses in which they lived, the ceremonies of their courts, he cannot accurately figure to himself; but neither do they essentially concern him. His business is with their inward man, with their feelings and behaviour in certain tragic situations which engage their passions as men; these have in them nothing local and casual; they are as accessible to the modern poet as to a contemporary."

BALDER DEAD (Page 25).

In one of his Letters (vol i., p. 47) Arnold writes that "Mallet and his version of the *Edda* is all that the poem is based upon." This is a reference to the *Northern Antiquities* of M. Mallet, which gives a translation of the Icelandic prose *Edda*, an account of Scandinavian mythology describing the origin of the universe, as well as the attributes and achievements of the Norse gods and goddesses. The story of the death of Balder as told in the *Edda* is printed below. It may usefully be compared with the account given by the poet. It is necessary that the reader should try to remember the leading facts in the Northern mythology, though, of course, the chief interest of the poem is a human one. It pictures the life and thoughts of the Vikings of the North—our own ancestors—in the Dark Ages:

At one time Balder the Good, having been tormented with terrible dreams, indicating that his life was in great danger, told them to the assembled Æsir, who resolved to conjure all things to ward off the danger that threatened.

Then Frigga, the wife of Odin, took an oath from fire and water, from iron, and all other metals, as well as from stones, earths, diseases, beasts, birds, poisons, and creeping things, that none of them would do any harm to Balder.

When this was done it became a favourite pastime of the Æsir at their meetings to get Balder to stand up and serve them as a mark, some hurling darts at him, some stones, while others hewed at him with their swords and battle-axes, for do they what they would none of them could harm him, and this was regarded by all as a great honour shown to Balder.

But when Lok beheld the scene he was sorely vexed that Balder was not hurt. Taking, therefore, the shape of a woman, he went to Fensalir, the mansion of Frigga. That goddess, when she saw the pretended woman, inquired of her if she knew what the Æsir were doing at their meetings. She replied that they were throwing darts and stones at Balder without being able to hurt him.

"Ay," said Frigga, "neither metal nor wood can hurt Balder, for I have exacted an oath from all of them."

"What!" exclaimed the woman, "have all things sworn to spare Balder?"

"All things," replied Frigga, "except one little shrub that grows on the eastern side of Valhalla, the abode of the gods, and is called Mistletoe. This I thought too young and feeble to crave an oath from."

As soon as Lok heard this he went to the place where the gods were assembled. There he found Hoder standing apart without partaking of the sports, on account of his blindness, and going up to him, said:

"Why dost thou not also throw something at Balder?"

"Because I am blind," answered Hoder, "and see not where Balder is, and have, moreover, nothing to throw with."

"Come then," said Lok; "do like the rest, and show honour to Balder by throwing this twig at him, and I will direct thy arm toward the place where he stands."

Hoder then took the mistletoe, and under the guidance of Lok darted it at Balder, who, pierced through and through, fell down lifeless. Surely never was there witnessed a more atrocious deed than this! When Balder fell, the Æsir were struck speechless with horror, and then they looked at each other; all were of one mind to lay hands on him who had done the deed, but they were obliged to delay their vengeance out of respect for the sacred place in which they were assembled.

They at length gave vent to their grief by loud cries, though not one of them could find words to express to the full his feelings. When the gods came to themselves, Frigga asked who among them wished to gain all her love and goodwill. "For this," said she, "shall he have who will ride to the under-world and try to find Balder and offer Hela a ransom if she will let him return to us."

Thereupon Hermod, surnamed the Nimble, the son of Odin, offered to go. Odin's horse, Sleipner, was then led forth, on which Hermod mounted, and galloped away on his mission.

The Æsir then took the dead body and bore it to the seashore, where stood Balder's ship *Hringhorn*, which passed for the largest in the world. But when they wanted to launch it in order to make Balder's funeral pile on it they were unable to make it stir. So they sent to Giant Land for a giantess named Hyrrokin, who came mounted on a wolf having twisted serpents for a bridle.

As soon as she alighted, Odin ordered four Berserkers to hold her steed fast; they were, however, obliged to throw the animal on the ground ere they could effect their purpose. Hyrrokin then went to the ship, and, with a single push, set it afloat, but the motion was so violent that fire sparkled from the rollers and the earth shook all around. Thor, enraged at the sight, grasped his mallet, and, but for the Æsir, would have broken the woman's skull.

Balder's body was then borne to the funeral pile on board the ship, and this ceremony had such an effect on Nanna, his wife, that her heart broke with grief, and her body was burnt on the same pile with her husband's. Thor stood up and blessed the pile with Miolnir, and during the ceremony kicked a dwarf named Litur, who was running before his feet, into the fire.

There was a vast concourse at Balder's funeral. First came Odin with Frigga and his ravens; then Frey, in his car drawn by a boar named Slidrugtanni; Heimdall rode his horse called Gulltop, and Freyja drove in her chariot drawn by cats. There were also a great many Frost Giants and Mountain Giants present. Odin laid on the pile the gold ring called Draupnir, which afterwards acquired the power of producing every ninth night eight rings of equal weight. Balder's horse was led to the pile, and consumed in the same flames on the body of his master.

Meanwhile Hermod was proceeding on his mission. For the space of nine days and as many nights he rode through deep glens, so dark that he could not see anything until he arrived at the river Gioll, which he passed over on a bridge covered with glittering gold. Modguder, the maiden who kept the bridge, asked him his name and lineage, telling him that the day before five bands of travellers bound for the under-world had ridden over the bridge and did not shake it so much as he alone. "But," she added, "thou hast not death's hue on thee, why then ridest thou here on the way to the under-world?"

"I ride," answered Hermod, "to seek Balder. Hast thou perchance seen him pass this way?"

"Balder," she replied, "hath ridden over Gioll's bridge; but there below, towards the north, lies the way to the abodes of the departed."

Hermod then pursued his journey until he came to the barred gates of the under-world. Here he alighted, girthed his saddle tighter, and, remounting, clapped both spurs to his horse, who cleared the gate by a tremendous leap without touching it. Hermod then rode on to the palace, where he found his brother Balder occupying the most lofty seat in the hall, and passed the night in his company. The next morning he besought Hela to let Balder ride home with him, assuring her that nothing but lamentations were to be heard among the Æsir. Hela answered that it should now be tried whether Balder was so beloved as he was said to be.

"If, therefore," she added, "all things in the world, both living and lifeless, weep for him, then shall he return to the Æsir; but if any one thing speak against him or refuse to weep, he shall be kept here."

Hermod then rose and Balder led him out of the hall and gave him the ring Draupnir, to present as a keepsake to Odin. Nanna also sent Frigga a linen cassock and other gifts, and to Fulla a gold finger-ring. Hermod then rode back and gave an account of all he had heard and witnessed.

The gods upon this despatched messengers throughout the world to beg everything to weep, in order that Balder might be delivered from Hela. All things very willingly did so, both men and every other living being, as well as earth and stones, and trees and metals, just as you must have seen those things weep when they are brought from a cold place into a hot one.

As the messengers were returning, feeling their mission had been quite successful, they found an old hag named Thankt sitting in a cavern, and begged her to weep for Balder. But she answered:

"Thaukt will wail
With arid tears
Balder's bale fire.
Nought, quick or dead,
By man's son gain I,
Let Hela hold what's hers."

It was strongly suspected that this hag was no other than Lok himself, who never ceased to work evil among the Æsir.

I. Sending.

6. **Lok the Accuser.** Lok, or Loki, was the evil spirit of Scandinavian mythology. The *Edda* calls him "the calumniator of the gods, the grand contriver of deceit and frauds, the reproach of gods and men. He is beautiful in his figure, but his mind is evil and his inclinations inconstant. Nobody renders him divine honours. He surpasses all mortals in the arts of perfidy and craft."

7. **Hoder.** "Among the gods we also reckon Hoder, who is blind, but extremely strong" (*Edda*). The name is said to mean war or combat, but the etymology is doubtful.

11. **Valhalla.** This was, according to Mallet, the "ordinary place of residence of Odin (or Woden or Wuotan), the father of the gods, where he rewarded all such as died sword in hand. There it was that he distributed to them praises and delights; there he received them at his table, where in a continual feast the pleasure of these heroes consisted."

16. **Odin.** According to the *Edda*, the great "All Father" was he who "liveth and governeth during the ages, directeth everything which is high and everything which is low, whatever is great and whatever is small; he hath made the heaven, and air, and man who is to live for ever; and before the heaven and the earth existed this god lived already with the giants." He is also described as "the terrible and severe god; the father of slaughters; he who giveth victory and reviveth courage in the conflict; who nameth those that are to be slain."

22. **So bright.** In the *Edda* we read: "So fair and dazzling is Balder in form and features that rays of light seem to issue from him; and thou mayst have some idea of the beauty of his hair when I tell thee that the whitest of all plants is called "Balder's brow." Balder is the mildest, the wisest, and the most eloquent of all the

gods. . . . He dwells in the heavenly mansion called Breidablik, in which nothing unclean can enter."

24. **Nornies.** The *Edda* speaks of "three maidens named Urtha, Verthandi, and Skulda (Present, Past, and Future), who fix the lifetime of all men. There are also many other Nornies, for when a man is born there is one to determine his fate. Some are of heavenly origin, but others belong to the races of the elves and dwarfs."

28. **Shall meet your doom.** According to the *Edda*, the day was to come when the giants and other monsters should make war upon the gods, and both parties in the conflict should finally perish.

41. **Balder's ship.** The custom among the Vikings of placing a dead warrior on a pyre upon the deck of his ship, firing it, and sending it out to sea is finely described by the poet in a later part of the poem.

49. **Lidskialf.** The palace of Odin, whence he could descry all the actions of men.

52. **Midgard.** The fortified dwelling given by the gods to men where they would be secure from the malignity of the Giants.

57. **Ida's plain.** The local habitation of the gods.

67. **Serimner.** In the *Edda* the flesh of the boar Scrimner is used to feed the heroes every day, and each night the animal is renewed again to provide food for the next day.

68. **Valkyries.** "There are numerous virgins in Valhalla, or the paradise of the heroes. Their business is to wait upon them, and they are called Valkyrior. Odin also employs them to choose in battles those who are to perish, and to make the victory incline to whatever side he pleases."

73. **Asgard.** The chief city of the gods, which was situated, according to the *Edda*, "in the middle of the universe."

109. **Hela.** The offspring of Lok, whom Odin cast into a region known as Niflheim, giving her power over nine worlds, into which she distributes those who are sent to her—that is to say, all who die through sickness or old age. Her habitation has exceedingly high walls and strongly-barred gates. Her hall is called Elvidnir, Hunger is her table, Starvation her knife, Delay her man, Slowness her maid, Precipice her threshold, Care her bed, and Burning Anguish forms the hangings of her apartments. The one half of her body is livid, the other half the colour of human flesh. She may therefore easily be recognised, and the more so as she has a dreadfully stern and grim countenance."

124. **The darkness of the final times.** This is the "twilight of the gods," the Götterdämmerung, when the gods and the world should be overwhelmed in destruction and darkness.

141. **Bifrost.** The rainbow **Heimdall** was a powerful deity, called also the White God, with teeth of pure gold, who dwelt at the end of Bifrost, and was warder to the gods.

211. **Postures of runes.** The arrangement of letters which were thought to have magic powers and significance among the Northern nations. The word "rune" meant originally something mysterious, something whispered in secret.

II. Journey to the Dead.

38. **The ash Igdrasil.** The *Edda* tells us that "it is under this ash that the gods assemble every day in council. It is the greatest and best of all trees. Its branches spread over the whole world, and even reach above heaven. It has three roots very wide asunder. The third root is in heaven, and it is here that the gods sit in judgment. Every day they ride up hither on horseback over Bifrost."

48. **Thor . . . his hammer.** Thor is the strongest of gods and men. He drives a car drawn by two goats, and possesses a mallet called Miolnir, "which both the Frost and Mountain Giants know to their cost when they see it hurled against them in the air; and no wonder, for it has split many a skull of their fathers and kindred" (*Edda*).

216. **Limber.** Pliant or flexible; closely allied to "limp" (Skeat).

219. **Him, too, foes await.** The *Edda* contains a detailed story of the capture of Lok by the gods under the guidance of Thor. The fugitive god took the form of a salmon, but was at last caught and bound upon three sharp-pointed rocks with cords which they afterwards changed into iron bonds. Then they suspended a serpent over him in such a manner that the venom from its fangs should fall upon his face drop by drop.

224. **Muspel's children.** Muspel was the southern land of fire from which one day should come the destroyers of heaven and hell. After making an end of gods and men, these terrible powers were to come to an end themselves, and the final conflagration of all things was to be brought about by their leader Surtur.

274. **This ring.** See l. 173 in Part III. of the poem, as well as the reference in the *Edda* account given above.

III. Funeral.

90. **Freya.** The second goddess in rank (next to Frigga), who "is wedded to a person called Oder. But Oder left his wife in order to travel into very remote countries. Since that time Freya continually weeps, and her tears are drops of pure gold" (*Edda*).

126. **Regner . . . Ella.** The Danish viking Regner, we are told in an early poem, was captured by Ella, King of Northumbria, and thrown into a dungeon full of loathsome serpents.

200 *et seq.* In later editions two of the similes here given are omitted, and the lines stand thus:

> "And long, in the far dark, blazed Balder's pile;
> But fainter, as the stars rose high, it flared:
> The bodies were consumed, ash choked the pile.
> And as, in a decaying winter fire,
> A charr'd log, falling, makes a shower of sparks,
> So with a shower of sparks the pile fell in,
> Reddening the sea around; and all was dark."

263. **The giant Ymir.** The father of the Frost Giants, who was slain by the sons of Bor, namely, Odin, Vili, and Ve. "From the body of Ymir they made the earth; from his blood they made the seas and waters; from his flesh the land; from his bones the mountains; and his teeth and jaws, together with some bits of broken bones, served them to make the stones and pebbles" (*Edda*).

326. **Niord.** The god who "rules over the winds, and checks the fury of the sea and of fire, and is therefore invoked by seafarers and fishermen."

358. **Thok with dry eyes, etc.** The *Edda* verses as given by Mallet are, in English:

> "Thok will wail
> With arid tears
> Balder's bale fire.
> Nought, quick or dead,
> By man's son gain I;
> Let Hela hold what's hers."

457. **Forset.** The son of Balder was the arbiter of the gods—"All that come to him with knotty lawsuits go away set at one again."

498. **Vidar.** He had "a very thick shoe; on him the gods have much trust in all straits."

Tyr or **Tiw.** The god of war; the most daring and intrepid of all the gods.

531. After the destruction of the universe "there will arise out of the sea another earth most lovely and verdant, with pleasant fields where the grain shall grow unsown. Vidar and Vali shall survive; neither the flood nor Surtur's fire shall harm them. They shall dwell on the plain of Ida, where Asgard formerly stood. Thither shall come the sons of Thor, bringing with them their father's mallet, Miolnir. Balder and Hoder shall also repair thither from the abode of death. There they shall sit and converse together, and call to mind their former knowledge and the perils they underwent, and the fight with the wolf Fenris and the Midgard serpent. There, too, they shall find in the grass golden tablets (orbs) which the Æsir (gods) once possessed. . . . During the conflagration caused by Surtur's fire a woman named Lif (Life) and a man named Lifdrasir shall lie concealed in a forest. They shall feed on morning dew, and their descendants shall soon spread over the whole earth."

THE CHURCH OF BROU (PAGE 59).

In the suburbs of the town of Bourg-en-Bresse, which lies thirty-six miles north-east of Lyons, stands the Church of Notre Dame de Brou. The choir of the church contains the sculptured tombs of Philibert II., who was Duke of Savoy near the end of the fifteenth century; his mother, Margaret of Bourbon; and his wife, Margaret of Austria. Philibert was married in 1500, and, only four years later, died from the effects of drinking cold water while heated with the exertion of the hunt. The

"Church of Brou" was erected by his Duchess, who afterwards became Governor of the Spanish Netherlands, and died in 1530. These are the historical facts upon which what there is of narrative in Arnold's poem is based. The reader will find them interesting for comparison.

I. The Castle.

11. **Mullioned.** A mullion is "an upright division between the lights of windows" (Skeat).
13. **From Vienna.** The real Duchess of Savoy was daughter of the Emperor Maximilian.
35. **Daïs.** According to Skeat the word is "now used of the raised floor on which the high table in a hall stands. Properly it was the table itself (Latin, *discus*). Later it was used of a canopy over a seat of state, or even of the seat of state itself.
64. **Duchess Maud.** This was Margaret of Bourbon.
112. **Saint John.** The Feast of St. John Baptist on June 24.

II. The Church.

21. **Chambery.** The real town is capital of the department Savoie, and about fifty miles from Bourg, which is the chief town of the department Ain.
22. **Dight.** Adorned. Skeat gives the derivation as from Anglo-Saxon *dihtan*, to adorn.

III. The Tomb.

14. **Bloody freight.** This is the only fault in one of Arnold's finest poems. It suggests at first the dead body of the Duke, but, of course, refers to the animals which the hunters have killed in the chase.
36. **Clere-story.** The upper level of the building, through the windows of which the moon would shine with uninterrupted radiance.

THE SCHOLAR-GIPSY (Page 65).

In Glanvil's *Vanity of Dogmatizing* a small volume bearing the date 1661, occurs a passage of which the following is the substance:

"There was very lately a lad in the University of Oxford who was by his poverty forced to leave his studies there, and at last to join himself to a company of vagabond gipsies. Among these extravagant people, by the insinuating subtilty of his carriage, he quickly got so much of their love and esteem as that they discovered to him their mystery. After he had been a pretty while exercised in the trade, there chanced to ride by a couple of scholars who had formerly been of his acquaintance. They quickly spied out their old friend among the gipsies, and he gave them an account of the necessity which drove him to that kind of life, and told them that the people he went with were not such impostors as they were

taken for, but that they had a traditional kind of learning among them, and could do wonders by the power of imagination, their fancy binding that of others; that himself had learned much of their art, and, when he had compassed the whole secret, he intended, he said, to leave their company, and give the world an account of what he had learned."

The poem of the Scholar-Gipsy, founded upon the above, is a pastoral elegy, the scene being laid in the country to the west of Oxford.

2. **Wattled cotes.** A cote is an enclosure, from the Anglo-Saxon word for a den. Wattles are flexible rods or twigs; wattled cotes are enclosures for sheep made of hurdles woven of pliant osiers.
10. **The quest.** The search for the lost scholar, who is supposed by the poet still to haunt the neighbourhood.
59. **Ingle-bench.** The ingle is the fire, from Latin *ignis;* the ingle-bench is the seat by the fire.
76. **Slow punt swings round.** The punt used to ferry passengers across the river. The force of the water would prevent it from crossing the stream in a straight line, and, guided by the rope, its path would describe a curve from bank to bank.
95. **Lasher.** The slack water collected above a weir in a river.
120. **Spark from heaven.** The inspiration by the help of which he could exercise his power of divination.
147. **Teen.** Sorrow, grief, from Anglo-Saxon *teona*, vexation.
182-190. It is thought that the poet here refers to Tennyson, whose *In Memoriam* had been lately published.
208. **Dido.** The Queen of Carthage who slew herself for love of the wandering Prince Æneas. In the sixth book of Virgil's *Æneid* we read how the Prince meets with her shade, and endeavours to excuse himself for his desertion by the plea that he was commanded by the gods and forced by fate to leave Carthage.

> "In vain he thus attempts her mind to move
> With tears and prayers and late-repenting love;
> Disdainfully she looked, then, turning round,
> But fixed her eyes unmoved upon the ground,
> And what he says and swears regards no more
> Than the deaf rocks when the loud billows roar;
> But whirled away, to shun his hateful sight,
> Hid in the forest, and the shades of night."

244. **Midland waters.** The Mediterranean Sea.
245. **Syrtes.** Sandbanks lying southward of Sicily near the coast of Africa.

THE FORSAKEN MERMAN (Page 72).

In subject this poem may be described as a kind of counterpart of Hans Andersen's beautiful tale of "The Little Mermaid." The relations between the beings of the sea and human creatures is a commonplace of Northern folklore. The Merman is supposed to be speaking.

18. **We went up the beach.** There is no suggestion in any of the Northern tales of the denizens of the sea of the tapering form of the conventional mermaid. The sea spirit in the Irish and Norse tales, however, takes at times the form of a seal, and the origin of the idea may here be indicated.

THE NECKAN (PAGE 76).

This is another poem on a subject similar to the last. The Neckan is the German water-spirit which was supposed to take great delight in music.

16. **Green** in the later edition is "kind."
46. **Cold** in the later edition is "mild.

We give on pp. 76, 77 the old form of the poem, which is in one respect more perfect from an artistic point of view. In the later form, after the priest has spoken the words, "Why sitt'st thou here?" etc., we read:

> "But lo, the staff, it budded!
> It green'd, it branch'd, it wav'd.
> 'O ruth of God!' the priest cried out,
> 'This lost sea-creature saved!'"

Yet, after this, the stanza "The cassock'd priest," etc., stands as before, and is followed by

> "He wept: 'The earth hath kindness,
> The sea, the starry poles;
> Earth, sea, and sky, and God above—
> But, ah, not human souls!'"

Then follows the final stanza with its note of despair, in spite of the heavenly sign.

THE STRAYED REVELLER (PAGE 78).

Ulysses, in his wanderings after the fall of Troy, came to the island of Æea, where dwelt Circe, the witch-daughter of the sun. A company of his men under Eurylochus was sent forward from the shore. What happened to them is thus told in Charles Lamb's *Adventures of Ulysses:*

"Eurylochus and his party proceeded up the country, till in a dale they descried the house of Circe, built of bright stone, by the road's side. Before her gate lay many beasts, as wolves, lions, leopards, which by her art she had rendered tame. These arose when they saw strangers, and ramped upon their hinder paws, and fawned upon Eurylochus and his men, who dreaded the effects of such monstrous kindness: and staying at the gate they heard the enchantress within, sitting at her loom, singing such strains as suspended all mortal faculties. . . . Strains so ravishingly

sweet provoked even the sagest and prudentest heads among the party to knock and call at the gate. This shining gate the enchantress opened, and bade them come in and feast. They unwise followed, all but Eurylochus, who stayed without the gate, suspicious that some train was laid for them. Being entered, she placed them in chairs of state, and set before them meal and honey and Smyrna wine, but mixed with baneful drugs of powerful enchantment. When they had eaten of these and drunk of her cup, she touched them with her charming-rod, and straight they were transformed into swine; only they still retained the minds of men, which made them the more to lament their brutish transformation. Having changed them, she shut them up in her sty with many more whom her sorceries had formerly changed, and gave them swine's food, mast and acorns and chestnuts, to eat."

Eurylochus having returned to tell Ulysses of the disappearance of his men—for he had not seen what had happened to them—the leader set out for the palace of Circe, and at the gateway was met by Mercury, who gave him an antidote against the potions of the enchantress. When she found that she had no power over him, she retransformed his men, and the whole company spent a year in her palace "in all manner of delight."

The youth of the poem is one of the revellers of Bacchus, who have drunk of Circe's magic potion, and is in her power.

38. **Iacchus.** Another name for Bacchus, the god of wine.
67. **Pan's flute-music.** Pan was the god of nature, inhabited the forests, and played on a flute made of a reed, leading the dance of nymphs and satyrs.
78. **Ampelus.** The beloved companion of Bacchus.
135. **Tiresias.** The blind soothsayer of Thebes. The Asopus is a river not far from the city. Tiresias lived to a very great age, and was one of the most famous seers of antiquity. Even in the lower world he was believed to exercise his powers of divination.
143. **Centaurs.** An ancient race of beings, each of whom had the head, shoulders, and arms of a man and the body and legs of a horse.
145. **Pelion.** A range of mountains in Thessaly, among which the chief of the Centaurs, named Chiron, had his cave.
162. **Scythian.** The Scythia of antiquity was the almost unknown region lying to the north of the Euxine (Black) Sea.
183. **Chorasmian Stream.** The Oxus of Central Asia on whose banks once lived an ancient race known as the Chorasmians.
206. **The Happy Islands.** According to the Greek mythology, the souls of the heroes passed after death to the Islands of the Blest.
220. **Hera's anger.** The blindness of Tiresias was said to have been inflicted upon him by the goddess Hera when he decided against her in a dispute with Zeus.
228. **Lapithæ.** A mythical people who lived in the mountains of Thessaly, and engaged in a war with the Centaurs, in which the latter were defeated. The final contest took place at the marriage feast of the King of the Lapithæ, and was brought about by the insolence of the Centaurs, who were inflamed with wine. Theseus, the hero of early Greece, fought on the side of the Lapithæ.

231. **Alcmena's dreadful son.** Herakles, or Hercules, one of whose "twelve labours" was to subdue the Centaurs, which he accomplished by means of his mighty bow.

257. **Thebes.** The powerful Greek city which achieved the supremacy over the rest of Greece under Epaminondas in the middle of the fourth century B.C.

Troy. The ancient city of Asia Minor, which was the scene of the famous siege of which Homer tells in his *Iliad*, and from which Ulysses had just returned.

259. **Argo.** The ship in which Jason, the early Greek hero, sailed over the Euxine (Black) Sea to Colchis on the quest of the Golden Fleece.

261. **Silenus.** The attendant of Bacchus.

275. **Mænad.** Another name for a Bacchante, one of the priestesses of Bacchus, who by means of wine worked themselves into a frenzy at the festivals of the god. They are usually represented as crowned with vine-leaves and clothed with the skins of fawns.

PHILOMELA (Page 87).

There are at least three versions of the story of Philomela. The reader might compare them, and then decide for himself which of them the poet has followed.

1. Tereus, King of Thrace, becoming weary of his wife Procne, carried off her sister Philomela, and, having cut out her tongue, concealed her in a prison in an ancient forest. Then he told his wife that her sister was dead. Meanwhile Philomela wove in her prison on her loom a purple web intertwined with white, showing clearly her sad fate. This she sent to Procne, who soon found out her sister, and in revenge slew the son of Tereus. The two sisters fled, pursued by the King, and as they went the gods changed Philomela into a nightingale, Procne into a swallow, and Tereus into a lapwing.

2. Tereus cut out his wife's tongue, and, giving out that she had died, married her sister Philomela. Procne, by means of her loom, made known the truth to Philomela, and in the subsequent flight, after the death of the son of Tereus, Procne was changed into a swallow, Philomela into a nightingale, and Tereus into a hawk.

3. Another version makes Procne the nightingale and Philomela the swallow.

MEMORIAL VERSES (Page 88).

Wordsworth died in 1850, Goethe in 1832, Byron in 1824. Arnold was closely akin as a poet and thinker with Wordsworth and Goethe, and in many respects the very antithesis of Byron.

14. **Titanic.** The Titans were the sons of Uranus (Heaven) and Gē (Earth), who rose against their father, and after a colossal war, which lasted ten years, were overthrown and hurled down to a cavity below Tartarus (hell).

23. **Europe's dying hour.** Goethe lived during the upheaval of Europe in the time of Napoleon.

38. **Orpheus.** The musician of Greek legend, who by the power of his voice and lyre not only charmed mortals, but moved wild beasts, and even trees and stones. He wedded the beautiful maiden Eurydice, who on her bridal day was stung in the ankle by a serpent, and died of the wound. Orpheus passed to Hades to see if by power of harp and voice he could win her back again. The powers of Hades, charmed with his music, restored Eurydice on condition that he did not turn to look at her until they reached the upper world. But so great was his affection that he forgot his promise, and lost his wife beyond recall.

72. **Rotha.** Wordsworth was buried in the churchyard of Grasmere, near which flows the Rotha.

QUIET WORK (Page 90).

We give this sonnet as it stands in the volume published in 1853. Three alterations were afterwards made in it. "Served" in l. 3 was changed to "kept"; "still advance" in l. 6 to "lasting fruit"; and "senseless" in l. 10 to "fitful." The underlying thought is the same as in Goethe's *Ohne Hast, Ohne Rast* ("Without Haste, Without Rest").

SHAKESPEARE (Page 90).

The scantiness of our knowledge of the outward life of Shakespeare is a commonplace of literary history.

CONSOLATION (Page 91).

14. **Lassa.** The holy city of Thibet, of which we now know rather more than did the poet or anyone of his time.

17. **Muses.** The statues of the divinities known as the Muses are in the Vatican.

21. **Uproar.** When this poem was written in 1849 Rome was being besieged by the French.

23. **Helicon.** A range of mountains in Greece sacred to the Muses.

MORALITY (Page 93).

This poem is an expansion of the thought contained in two lines of another sonnet:

> "Know, man hath all which Nature hath, but more,
> And in that *more* lie all his hopes of good."

The *more* is the moral sense, morality.

SONGS OF CALLICLES (PAGE 94).

These are taken from the long dramatic poem *Empedocles on Etna*, in which one of the *dramatis personæ* is a young harp-player named Callicles.

Empedocles was a Sicilian philosopher of the middle of the fourth century B.C., who, on account of his skill in the healing art, was reckoned a magician. Tradition relates that he threw himself into the crater of Mount Etna in order to raise the belief that he was a god; but it is said that in an eruption one of his sandals was thrown up, thus revealing the manner of his death.

I.

The scene of the poem is a glen on the highest skirts of the woody region of Etna. This is one of Arnold's finest descriptive passages.

II.

5. **Apollo.** The god of poetry and music and the leader of the Muses, who frequented Mount Helicon.
11. **Thisbe.** This lay between Mount Helicon and the Gulf of Corinth.
39. **Olympus.** The mountain range between Macedonia and Thessaly which was the abode of the gods.

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